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QUESTIONS OF THE DAY. No. 1

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[Fenton, Norman Bridgman]

THE

INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT

IN

NEW YORK

AS

AN ELEMENT IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS AND A  
PROBLEM IN PARTY GOVERNMENT

BY JUNIUS [pseud.]

NEW YORK  
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1880

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## PREFATORY.

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THAT disaffection toward Republican party management, showing itself first in New York, and there by far the most serious, has for some time existed, and that it has rapidly increased during the past year, are significant facts of which the country has taken notice. Nor has it escaped attention that distrust, tending to hostility, is most developed among the younger men, or that it has, more and more, of late, manifested itself in other States, and especially in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.

It is not, however, so well known from what causes this disaffection has first arisen in New York, or from what elements, if neglected there, it may grow into a serious peril to the Republican party.

Having stood in its ranks since the Republican party was organized in New York, and having never co-operated with the Independents (as the leaders of the disaffection movement are styled), I have thought I may fairly present the issue between them and the

party managers, and I have hoped that these reflections may now serve a useful purpose by attracting more attention to a subject of national importance.

I have not the least right or intention to assume to speak for the Independents. It is certain, on the other hand, that I shall offend the Republican managers ; for my intention to be just to the higher sentiment of the party will compel me to condemn much for which these managers are responsible.

There will, doubtless, be those—no matter from what motive—who will charge that such admissions of mismanagement and weakness as these pages contain, are not compatible with fidelity to the Republican party, or with a desire for its success at the next elections. To all such charges I can only interpose an emphatic denial of their truth, and declare that the faith of no man in the principles of the Republican party, and the wish of no man to see them not only sustained in the coming elections, but made supreme in our politics, can be more earnest than my own. But dangers are not avoided by closing our eyes to them ; we must see things as they are day by day. It is the part of statesmanship, while comprehending the sources of existing evils, to adopt a policy that will arrest them. And I must add my profound conviction that the strength needed to ensure Republican victories is most likely to come to us through a better understanding of the causes of our waning majorities during some late years,

and not yet wholly regained ; through less blind faith in names, passions, and prejudices, and greater fidelity to principles and to pledges ; through less reliance upon management, patronage, and all selfish influences, and more upon open and manly appeals to the intelligence and virtue of the country. We need a policy which shall commend itself to honest and enlightened voters, and not a policy dictated by manipulating politicians and executed by domineering officials and packed primaries and conventions.

It is because a just presentation of the "Independent Movement in New York" involves not merely the conditions of success in that great State, but the very foundations of stability in the Republican party in all those particulars, that I have thought the subject peculiarly worthy of discussion at this time. I believe the Republican party at the North—even after having, within the last few years, lost so many worthy supporters—yet embraces by much the larger portion of the moral and intellectual elements of the country, and that in the support of the principles to which it is pledged are the germ and the conditions of a possible growth with which the highest interests of the nation are identified. But will the party now show itself worthy of its history and its opportunities? Will it rise to the level of its pledges and its duty, or will it surrender to the leadership and control of scheming partisans and arrogant politicians? Will it, by an honest and

statesmanlike adherence to principles, and by a reasonable compromise of preferences, put an end to its dissensions and make a victory possible in the coming election? On the answer to these questions I believe its fate depends.

The very nature of the issues to be considered—requiring as they do a candid estimate of the positions of bodies, which, while standing in an attitude of distrust, if not of antagonism, yet both claim to be the true representatives of sound Republican principles and policy—makes it proper that the facts and the reasoning should be presented upon their intrinsic merits, without the least prejudice or reinforcement from the personality of the author.

But why take the great name of *Junius*? Not in the least from any pretense of his ability, and so all criticism on that point will be needless. It is my wish, rather, to call attention to the crisis and the lesson of his time, in so many ways analogous to our own; to a contest in which the higher sentiment and the demand for freedom in elections and for honesty and fidelity in political life—uttered ably and courageously through the public press for the *first time*—contended successfully with all that was vindictive, tyrannical, and corrupt in a partisan oligarchy which seemed impregnable; to a victory in behalf of good administration, so important, and upon which Junius declares “the ruin “or prosperity of a State so much depends,” that its sal-

utary effects have been felt down to our own times. Then, as now, the freedom of elections from partisan coercion was a vital question ; and Junius, in dedicating his work to the British people, said, "I cannot doubt you will assert the freedom of elections, and vindicate your exclusive right to choose your representatives." \*

Junius, as a first example in British politics, boldly arraigned the great politicians of his day for prostituting the appointing power and making merchandise and spoils of offices and places in the shambles of patronage and favoritism.

Junius, in describing the reckless partisans of his time, and in defining the situation which called forth his letters, uses this language, so fit to be adopted, and so apt to bring before us the duties and the leaders of our day: "No man laments more sincerely than I do, the unhappy differences which have arisen." "The hearty friends of the cause are provoked and disgusted. The lukewarm advocate avails himself of any pretense to relapse into indolent indifference. *The false, insidious partisan* who creates or foment the disorder, sees the fruit of his dishonest industry ripen beyond his hopes, and rejoices in the promise of a banquet only delicious to such appetite as his own. *It is time for those who really mean the cause and the people, who have*

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\* Junius's Preface to his Letters.

*“no views to private advantage, and who have virtue  
“enough to prefer the general good of the community to the  
“gratification of personal animosities ;—it is time for such  
“men to interpose. Let us try whether our fatal dissen-  
“sions cannot be reconciled ; or if that be impracticable,  
“let us guard against the worst effects of division, and  
“endeavor to persuade those furious partisans, if they  
“will not consent to draw together, to be separately use-  
“ful to that cause which they all pretend to be attach-  
“ed to. Honor and honesty must not be renounced.” \**

Publicity and thorough discussion in the public press are now, as a century ago, the best remedies for the same evils. The example of Junius is as apt to our times as his arguments. While, therefore, I may not aspire to the power, I may invoke the example and fitly sign the name of

JUNIUS.

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\* Woodfall's Junius, p. 148.

# CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
CHAPTER I.—THE SITUATION AND THE QUESTIONS INVOLVED...	9
CHAPTER II.—FORMER ELECTIONS IN NEW YORK, AND SOME REASON WHY HER VOTE IS DOUBTFUL.....	21
CHAPTER III.—THE ELECTION OF MR. CORNELL FOR GOVERNOR, WHAT IT TEACHES, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE INDEPEND- ENTS .....	35
CHAPTER IV.—THE PLATFORM AND THEORIES OF THE INDE- PENDENTS, AND THE PRACTICAL ISSUES THEY RAISE.....	59
CHAPTER V.—THE ORIGINAL AND PECULIAR "MACHINE" AND SPOILS SYSTEM OF NEW YORK. BURR, VAN BUREN, JACKSON.	68
CHAPTER VI.—THE NEW YORK PRIMARIES, THEIR THEORY, THEIR PLEDGES, AND THEIR SUBSERVIENCY. THE PHILADELPHIA PRIMARIES. THE ALBANY PRIMARIES.....	81
CHAPTER VII.—SOME OTHER TESTS OF REPUBLICAN OPINION IN NEW YORK, AND ESPECIALLY THE PUBLIC JOURNALS AND THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB.....	114
CHAPTER VIII.—THE UTICA CONVENTION FOR THE ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO CHICAGO, AND ITS INSTRUCTIONS.....	125 "
CHAPTER IX.—THE THIRD TERM ISSUE. GENERAL GRANT, MR. BLAINE, MR. SHERMAN, MR. EDMUNDS AND MR. WASHBURN AS CANDIDATES. THE CIVIL SERVICE QUESTION.....	153
CHAPTER X.—WHAT THE NEW YORK MACHINE AND SPOILS SYSTEM NOW ARE IN THEORY AND PRACTICE. HAVE DEGRADED OFFI- CIAL LIFE, AND PRODUCED A REBELLION IN THE PARTY.....	167
CHAPTER XI.—THE INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT A DEVELOPMENT, AND NOT A MERE UPRISING. ITS TRUE AIMS. HOW IT SHOULD BE TREATED AT CHICAGO.....	181
APPENDIX.....	189





# THE INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE SITUATION AND THE QUESTIONS INVOLVED.

AT a time when the great parties are marshaling their forces for a contest, of which the issue is more doubtful than any in recent years, it is natural that attention should rest anxiously upon the prospects in that great State of which the vote is known to be decisive. That both the parties—each according to its peculiar methods—will use their utmost efforts to secure a majority of that vote, we may be sure.

But in addition to the anxiety which the Republicans may well feel, even if their full vote can be combined, they have just concern lest the union of discordant elements in their own ranks shall be found impossible. Their more difficult problem may be, not to prevent a majority of the voters of New York from going with the Democrats, but to unite a majority, already their

own, upon the Republican candidates. It is true that the Democrats, in the last election in New York, appeared, in form, to be even more divided than the Republicans; but it is not true (as it was with the Republicans that their division was based upon any questions of principle or permanency, or that it disclosed any antagonisms for which easy partisan devices are not a remedy. A mere faction fight led by John Kelly, or by any other modern Cleon, presents no such problem as that involved when the more intelligent and conscientious members of a party repudiate its leaders, refuse, on grounds of principle, to vote for its candidates, and arraign the party itself for infidelity to pledges and to principles. It is the nature of that problem, now for the first time presented in the history of the Republican party,—the fact that the peculiar remedies required are quite beyond those afforded by mere partisan or local action, and the further important fact that the party leaders and methods in the State are themselves held to be largely responsible for disaffections which make the divisions in the Empire State a fit subject of national concern.

When large numbers of earnest and conscientious Republicans, standing in high places of social life and representing both vast interest and great moral forces in politics, arraign the action of the party leaders of their State as unworthy and dangerous, and when such arraignment is supported by leading public journals of

the highest moral tone in the party—and especially when disaffection has already reached the stage of political action, and has demonstrated a power in the most recent State elections which would have defeated the Republican candidate for governor, but for the fortuitous concurrence of a mere faction fight on the part of the Democrats—surely, at such a crisis, the time has come when every thoughtful Republican of the land should give his attention to the political affairs of New York. Do these disaffected Republicans control votes and influence enough to defeat the Republican candidate for the Presidency, just as we shall see that they have demonstrated their ability to defeat Mr. Cornell for governor? Is it their purpose so to use that power, if unjustly treated by the party managers in the next elections? These are vital questions. Even impetuous partisans stop to ask them. They are not, however, the only questions being pondered in thoughtful minds, but these others as well: What are the causes of such original and anomalous party divisions? Who is responsible for the threatening and increasing antagonism between the members of the same great party? Are the fault and the responsibility all on one side, or in part on both sides? What measures can be taken to restore confidence and harmony of action, without which an overwhelming defeat of the party is certain, if not at once, yet at no distant day?

When a party finds great numbers of its voters

refusing to support its candidates, and combining for hostile political action because principles are disregarded—as has been the case in New York—one of these conclusions is inevitable: (1). The disaffected members are in the right; (2). They are laboring under a serious delusion; (3). They are dishonest plotters and intriguing malcontents; (4). The party itself, under pernicious leadership, is drifting from its principles and declining in its moral tone. In a crisis like the present, the facts on such points ought not to be in doubt.

The same reasons which make it necessary to bring the divisions in New York before the great Republican party beyond her limits, make it impossible to accept a view of the situation only from one side—only from the partisans who manage what is generally called the “Machine” in that State. We must consider, if not what the Independents have to say for themselves, at least what may be fairly said by those who are neither followers of the Machine nor committed to the Independents.

The direct object to be sought is a united vote for the Republican candidates at the next election, and the ultimate aims are such fidelity to principles and such just and public method of party action as shall in the future afford no just grounds for division. To secure these results both sides must be heard, and the views of both must be fairly considered. When it is a part of

the later grievances of the Independents, that the convention just held for selecting delegates to Chicago was against all precedent hurried together for a foregone purpose, that it was arbitrarily controlled by a few partisan managers, and that its vote and instructions represent, not the real voice of the people, but the wishes of the organized politicians of New York, are the representations and preferences of these delegates alone to be considered by a party to which victory is impossible without securing every class of Republican voters? In presence of the fact that the action and policy of Senator Conkling are claimed to have in themselves contributed to Republican disaffection, and that he does not represent the best elements in the Republican party of the State, is the convention at Chicago to look no further than the confident assurances which, as the head of that delegation, and from his peculiar character and views of politics, it is inevitable that he will give?

Are unanimity and victory to be secured by arbitrarily assuming that everything thus arraigned is right, and that those who complain are factionists utterly in the wrong, and utterly unworthy of even a hearing? The decision on these points may very likely involve the vote of New York in the next election; for it may be assumed, on the one hand, that if the facts on both sides are investigated, a just conclusion will be reached, and that in such a conclusion all New York

Republicans will acquiesce; and on the other, that if the convention at Chicago shall act in the spirit of the two last State conventions in New York, there will be, for reasons to be set forth, a division in the Republican ranks so serious that the State may fall to the Democrats.

II. The disaffection in New York which has produced what is there called the "Independent Movement," and which, for the first time in the party history, has taken the form of political antagonism at an election, cannot be understood without considering both those elements which it has in common with the politics of other States, and those not less important, which are peculiar to the politics of New York. So far as it illustrates a growing discontent with partisan tyranny, resents official dictation at elections and demands fidelity to principles, the Independent Movement in New York is identical in spirit with the disaffection in some degree to be found in all the leading States of the Union.

But the movement is peculiar and of surpassing vigor in New York for the same reasons, and in the same degree, that the political elements and experience of that State are themselves extreme and peculiar. It is enough to illustrate the peculiarity of the situation, that no other State has had in her population such extremes of riches and poverty, ignorance and bigotry so degrading, or wealth and com-

merce so controlling. In no other State has federal patronage been so extensive, or official interference with local politics so tyrannical. Nowhere else has official life been so corrupt, or partisan domination so offensive. Nowhere else was a proscriptive spoils system so early matured, nor elsewhere has it been carried to such extremes of tyranny and corruption. More than in any other part of the Union, political affairs in New York have been prostituted into a trade, and those who manage them have taken the airs of feudal lords in the domain of politics. To an extent nowhere else equaled, the primary organizations of parties in New York have been on theories and methods hostile to principles and morality, and equally tending to unmanly subserviency on the part of the many who follow, and to arrogance and tyranny on the part of the few who lead. In no other State have political affairs become so separated from the recognized interests and common respect of the people; nor elsewhere has it been possible, in the same degree, for a man to be a leader in the sphere of politics, while remaining unknown and without respect in the social, moral, and religious life of the people. If any of these statements are disagreeable and shall seem extreme to those not familiar with the politics of New York, it is none the less necessary that they should be understood in dealing with the Independents; and the

facts that justify what I have asserted will not be wanting.

III. The delegates from New York will, of course, claim before the convention to fully and fairly represent the sentiment of the State; and, according to the usual action of such bodies, there can be no other official representation. It will be further claimed by the delegates that to distrust their assurance is to question either their integrity or their capacity. The temptation on the part of some to denounce all those who dissent from their views, and all those who refuse to vote for the Republican nominees as traitors to the party, and unworthy of notice, will be irresistible. Every one acquainted with such bodies knows how readily, in the heat of their zeal and confidence, such partisan representation finds acceptance. The danger will be all the greater at Chicago, because, as we shall find, the delegates most favorable to the non-partisan sentiment of the people will be enslaved to silence by the instructions of the partisan majority of the Utica Convention. Here lies the peril to the Republican cause. Has it the courage required by the occasion? The action of the party leaders in hastening a convention, in silencing the expression of individual opinion, and in defeating the representation of the large minority by instructions to sustain, at all hazards, a candidate provided by a few leaders beforehand, are equally evidence of audacity and of fear. But such



arbitrary methods of producing a solid North do not, any more than analogous methods for producing a solid South, show the real character of Republican sentiment, and they make it all the more important that that sentiment should be expressed through channels not thus closed against it.

In the light of what has been suggested we may see that the consideration of the Independent movement in New York, really raises four distinct classes of inquiries which are very often confounded :

1. The origin, character, and strength of the movement itself.

2. The measure and nature of the independence which a good citizen may justly assert for himself while adhering faithfully to a great party.

3. The degree in which the delegates to Chicago truly represent, and have a moral right to bind, the Republicans of New York, and the probable effect of their attempting to do so.

4. The policy that should be adopted by the Republican party, first, for uniting its members in the next election, and, finally, for averting such antagonisms as now threaten its supremacy in the future.

If the greater interest attaches for the moment to what directly concerns the next elections, that is not less important which relates to the permanent rights and obligations of a good citizen as a member of a party, and to the conditions of prosperity in a party

which includes within its ranks by far the greater portion of the educated and independent citizens of the country. Were there no audience to be addressed except the party leaders in New York, these pages might be useless. But there is a great body of people in this State, now standing midway between the avowed Independents and the banded partisans, whose opinions are undetermined, and whose final attitude is uncertain. And it may be hoped that delegates coming from States where politics are purer, freer, and more open, as well nearer to the hearts of the people, will be found more ready to listen with candor and to act with wisdom than are some at least among those from New York, so many of whom are conspiring, and all of whom are constrained to carry into effect a foregone purpose, whatever may be the consequences. Delegates from other States will at least have the curiosity to inquire why the leaders in New York have allowed, if they have not caused, divisions more dangerous than any known elsewhere. As they value the supremacy of their party they should know why it has happened that the Independents, whom such leaders may denounce as too few and feeble to be worthy of notice, have not merely an organized existence, but have been able to demonstrate an ability to defeat an election! There must be some adequate cause for an effect so threatening and so unprecedented. Sensible men do not break away from their party and forfeit every chance for

office and favor, for no other purpose than to stand faithfully by its principles, unless those principles are, at least apparently, in danger.

Four years ago the dissaffected Republicans—the Independents in New York—were strong enough to make an impression at Cincinnati; the defeat of Mr. Conkling as a candidate was largely due to that cause; but now their strength has so increased that neither he nor any other leader of the Republicans in the State is thought, even within partisan circles, to have the best chance of success. These facts are certainly significant; but they are by no means so significant as the broader fact that the Republican party is so divided and demoralized by bad leadership in a State having a tenth part of the population, and far more than a tenth part of the financial and moral influence of the Union, that no Republican candidate for the Presidency could be selected from among those who control its politics, who could secure the vote of a twentieth part of the delegates of the party—at least without taking a candidate identified with an administration to which those leaders have been constantly hostile.

And, beyond this, we have the most extraordinary of all the peculiarities in the politics of New York—the unprecedented facts that the partisan leaders, while in the name of fidelity to the party, insisting upon the duty of every Republican to vote for the regular nominees good or bad, have yet themselves steadily held a hostile

and rebellious attitude toward the national administration of their own party; hardly once since it came into power mentioning it with respect in the State or giving it the least aid at Washington. No similar instance of insubordination and hostility has occurred in the history of the party.

## CHAPTER II.

### FORMER ELECTIONS IN NEW YORK, AND SOME REASON WHY HER VOTE IS DOUBTFUL.

THAT the vote of New York is essential to the triumph of either party, is universally recognized. It is not so well understood that, without the vote of the Independents, the Republican prospect is not encouraging. Let us look into the facts.

The only Northern States in which the issue can be regarded as doubtful are Indiana and New York. Indiana is now Democratic, and only sanguine Republicans are confident of her fifteen votes for their candidate. But neither party by carrying Indiana would secure a victory. It is the thirty-five votes of New York that are essential.

Sanguine Republicans may be found who will declare it easy to carry New York. They were equally confident of the vote of New York four years ago, but it was lost. The Democrats being certain of 138 votes from the South, and reasonably sure of Indiana, will be able to concentrate their efforts upon New York. The Re-

publicans must have careful regard to local feeling in several States.

The lessons of the past, as well as the political and social condition in New York, in part already explained, should admonish us that its vote is intrinsically doubtful.

The assurance that the division among the Democrats will give the Republicans the victory in the election of President as it did in the election of Cornell for governor, which is put forward as a ground of hope by partisan managers, who persist in measures which threaten a division in their own party, is so presumptuous and unsafe that no candid and well-informed man will rely upon it. It is always prudent to recall the past. In 1857, the Republicans carried the State for John A. King. But in 1858, the Democrats elected several of the State officers, though Morgan, a Republican, secured his election as governor. In 1861, Morgan was again made governor; but so close had been the balance between the parties, that at every election, from 1858 to 1862, the Democrats filled the office of secretary of State. In 1863, the Democrats made Seymour governor. In 1865, the majority returned to the Republicans and Fenton was made governor; but the Democrats elected the comptroller, treasurer, attorney-general, and a majority of the Assembly. In 1868, the Democrats elected Hoffman governor and the State officers as well; but the Republicans elected a

majority of the legislature. In 1869, the Democrats carried all before them, and in 1870, they re-elected Hoffman governor.

Then followed the exposure of the Tweed and Barnard corruptions and a loss of confidence in the Democrats. But as these corruptions were not brought to light by any action of the Republican party or of its managers, but by the courage and energy of *The New York Times* (a newspaper which was then, as it has been since, in a high degree independent of all partisan influence), and as the Republican party naturally failed to act vigorously against the authors of abuses, out of which men prominent in its councils were to a large extent known (and, to a far greater extent, were generally believed), to have made profits, the Republican party gained comparatively little by what otherwise would have been the ruin of its adversary.

Still the Democratic party, which was by far the most involved in the corruption, temporarily lost power, and John A. Dix was elected governor in 1872, for the term of two years. But the very next year, the Democrats elected the secretary of State, the attorney-general, the treasurer, and the State engineer. By that time the action of the reformers or Independents, mainly through the celebrated "Committee of Seventy" and the "Union League Club," aided powerfully by the *Times* newspaper, and other leading city journals, had made the cause and the cry of reform popular.

The people were angry and the situation was desperate. The Republican party, having been too much tarnished, and being too partisan and selfish in its management, to appropriate the new power to itself, that power was available to any politician sufficiently cautious not to have been detected in anything very bad, and sufficiently unscrupulous and cunning to put himself before the popular breeze, and to promise everything in the way of reform which the people longed to see accomplished. *Samuel J. Tilden* did not fail to see his chance. To all the manifold work of reform, which year after year had been done in New York, and to the aims, the sacrifices, and the spirit of a reformer, he had been as utterly a stranger, as a fit chairman of the Democratic State Committee, during the rising fortunes of Tweed and Barnard, might be expected to be. With a cunning secresy and adroitness never surpassed since the time of Walpole, he had avoided exposure while remaining on intimate terms with Tweed, almost until the moment when he presented himself as a candidate in order to go into power as a reformer over the ruins of his friend and fellow member of the Democratic State Central Committee. He audaciously came forward not merely as a great reformer, but as a great lawyer and statesman. As a lawyer, he had devoted himself to the money-making business of reorganizing bankrupt railroad corporations, according to a moral code with which the records of the courts have lately made the country



familiar, and with a legal ability such as was consistent with never having more than once spoken in the highest courts of his own State, and never, in a single instance, having raised his voice in the Supreme Court of the nation. To statesmanship, his claims were his action as chairman of the Democratic State Committee during the frauds that elected Hoffman; his serene composure while Barnard, Cardozo, Sweeney, and Tweed, shared with himself the leadership of the New York Democracy; one term of inconspicuous, poor service in the State Assembly; and one long, dreary argument to prove that it was the duty of Buchanan to allow Jefferson Davis to divide the Union.

But so anxious were the people for a reform of abuses, so blind were they to everything but mere promises to bring it about, and so feeble, by reason of the bad record of its leaders, was the hold of the Republicans upon that limited number of voters by whom the elections are decided in New York, that such a jurist, reformer, and statesman, as Samuel J. Tilden, was able to take the State from the Republicans in 1874, when all the stupendous frauds and robberies by Democratic officials were fresh in their memories. Nor should too much of this success be attributed to mere management and audacity; for the very next year, Mr. Kernon, a Democrat of ability and high character, was elected to fill the place of a Republican in the United States Senate. But a moment of reflection will satisfy any candid

mind that such results would have been impossible, if the party management and morality of the Republicans had stood much higher in public estimation than the management and morality of their opponents, and on that point we shall soon find decisive evidence.

In 1876, Mr. Robinson, a Democrat of good reputation and a recent convert from the Republicans under whom he had been comptroller, became governor, for the new constitutional term of three years; and Mr. John Bigelow, late Republican minister to France, who had also left the Republicans, was continued as secretary of State, he having held that office under Governor Tilden. We cannot say that it was the ignorant masses, or the Democratic demagogues, who for a time got the upper hand; for the leading Democratic officers elected were worthy men of culture. They were the very best of those whom Republicans had themselves made officers, and who went over to the Democrats with reputations untarnished. And we must not forget that they represent an influential class of men whose votes in the next election are most uncertain.

Thus, during the last eleven years (1869 to 1879, inclusive), except 1873 and 1874 when General Dix was governor, Democrats have filled the executive chair of New York; and even under General Dix, as we have seen, a majority of the other State officials were Democrats. How far the manner in which Governor Cornell

was elected, last fall, affects the inference to be drawn from such facts we shall soon see.

But a naked statement of these facts falls far short of conveying that lesson of warning which they ought to give us. The period was one of frauds and corruptions, so varied and stupendous, on the part of Democratic officials, that the Republican party might have secured an overwhelming and long-continued hold of power had the party managers or the party itself, been able to stand before the people as unstained and worthy of confidence. The illegal and corrupt manufacture of naturalization papers in 1868, and the known frauds, through their use, and otherwise, in Hoffman's election; the notorious and intolerable corruption and injustice of the Judges, McCunn, Cardozo and Barnard; the open pillage and venal use of official authority in many ways, by Connolly and Tweed, to say nothing of Sweeney, Genet, Tom Fields and others of lesser magnitude, all of whom were Democratic officers—taken together make a burthen of infamy, heaped upon a party which cannot be considered, in the light of so much success by the Democrats in the period covering its exposure, without either impeaching the common sense and common honesty of the people of New York, or casting upon the republican party and its leaders the most serious suspicions of incompetency or of infidelity, or both together. These suggestions are so painful to a Republican to make that I would gladly

have passed over them in silence, but for their vital bearing upon the question between the Independents and the partisans in the coming election. The history of these times is one of the stages of development which have brought Republican disaffection to its present attitude in the State. The inability of Republican party management to gain power, in such a crisis of corruption on the part of its adversaries, is one of the reasons why its methods are now so generally condemned and its leaders command so little respect beyond mere partisan circles. The history of modern politics presents no fact so remarkable as the failure of the Republican leaders, with such an opportunity, to achieve a decisive and enduring triumph. It must stand as a disgraceful impeachment either of themselves or of their political system and methods. But such suggestions ought not to be made without proof. I might refer to the fact that the gains which carried the Democratic majority to 50,000 were made largely from the honest and intelligent classes—that none of the Republican partisan leaders (for General Dix was not such) worked on the committee of seventy, or in any way contributed to expose the great frauds, or to bring any of their authors to justice. But we need not rest on such proofs. The direct evidence is decisive, not only that the Republican managers were deeply implicated in corruption, but that as early as 1871, *the more high-toned and Independent*

*Republicans had for that reason begun to refuse to vote.*

I quote from an official letter of Alonzo B. Cornell, the present governor of New York, and then chairman of the Republican State Committee, dated August 10th, 1871. The letter was addressed to a fellow member of the State Committee and was doubtless not intended for publication; but it got into the *New York Times*. Mr. Cornell says, "when the delegates to the general committee of 1871 were elected, *a very large portion of the true Republicans in every district declined to take part in such election*, on account of the frauds and violence and the facts hereinbefore set forth." He had before said that the rolls contained fictitious names, that Democratic tickets had been issued from Republican boxes, and that the interests of the Republican ticket could not be trusted to district associations, and even that large numbers of Democrats were enrolled as members of the associations. Here may be said to be the original instance of Republicans in New York refusing to vote. He then says, "*Many of the presidents of the Republican associations were in the direct employment of the city officials. . . . Members of the general committee have since acknowledged that they were paid large sums of money to vote in accordance with the dictates of the Tammany officials. . . . As might be expected, the election of delegates to conventions in nearly all of the districts, were mere farces.*"

"It became evident that the interests of the Republican ticket could not be safely trusted to the district associations."

Thus the chairman of the State Committee, in his arraignment of the New York "Primaries," to which he now owes his nomination, makes it clear that the difference of management and moral tone of the managers of the two parties in 1871, was the difference between the thief and the receiver of stolen goods—the difference between the burglars who broke open the treasury, and their confederates in the dark around the corner, who held the bag and stood guard against the police. The point between the engineers of the machine and the Independents, as to delegates, is that the former only admit that "the election of delegates to conventions in many of the districts were *mere farces*," nine years ago; while the latter claim that the farces have been continued, under the same party managers, for the purposes of the two last State conventions. But, even if the question of substance had really become a mere question of time, as to election abuses, our inquiry into the facts would not be less essential; for those who believe in election farces and shams, at the present time, are far more numerous and far more dangerous to the Republican party than those who believed the same thing in 1871. It is unquestionable that the character of New York politics has, in a limited sense, improved since that date; but about as much in one party as the

other, so that the relative chances of each are much the same. John Kelly—demagogue and factionist though he be—is by no means a thief and a robber like Tweed. If he sees no impropriety in nominating himself for office, or in using the power and patronage of the city treasury to bring about his election, is there any very decisive evidence that the Republican secretary of the treasury thinks any less of John Kelly on that account?

I believe it but justice to Mr. Cornell to say, and in this connection I take pleasure in saying, that he was not suspected of conniving at such venality, and that his honesty is above question. But he was then, as he has since been until very lately, the chairman of the State Republican Committee, managing the party under instructions from Mr. Conkling (an equally honorable, though far abler man): and when under their management such abuses are developed and acknowledged, is it any matter of surprise that the people (not seeing good cause to charge the corruption to these leaders) charge it to their system of management—to the substitution of official dictation, secret intrigue, and servile instructions, where open adhesion to principles and direct appeals to the popular choice are the best guarantees of purity and success?

A certain kind of reorganization of the primaries took place in 1871, but no change of system. If mere bribery in the use of money has been curtailed, bribery in the bestowal of offices and employments has not

in the least, and servility and arbitrary manipulation have been made worse.

In other ways the letter shows how utterly impossible it was for Mr. Conkling and Mr. Cornell to take their party before the people in 1874, as especially worthy to lead a reform, or even to take the place of a party directly responsible for corrupt officials. Indeed, Mr. Cornell says as much himself; for he proclaims, in the letter, the "utter demoralization of the existing organization of the party *on account of its being hopelessly subsidized by the Tammany plunderers.*" But this was not all which then, or a little later, weighed down the Republican party; for the scandals of the national administration were being put into the scales—the abuses leading to the retirement of Mr. Murphy as collector, the moiety corruptions, the whisky frauds, and the District of Columbia Belknap and Babcock scandals (of which I believe General Grant was absolutely innocent); though apparently, and actually in the eyes of some Republicans, including not a few Independents, he stood in very suspicious relations to some of them. And Mr. Conkling, being a leading friend and adviser of the President, and known to be opposed to measures of reform in the Civil Service by which such abuses would have been checked, and Mr. Cornell taking no part in support of, but rather sneering at, reform in New York, it is easy to see how natural have been the origin and growth of the distrust and opposition of the

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Independents, both toward the Republican party machine and toward its managers and President Grant. Certainly there is no reason for surprise that, in view of the admission of so much corruption in the working of the Republican machine by its present managers, there is in New York a deep distrust of all they propose and a stern resolve for the future to accept neither their instructions nor their favorites. I think this view, so far as General Grant's character and motives are concerned, not well founded; but the voters will consider his candidacy in the light of the platform, the apparent policy, and the friends in connection with which he may come before the country.

The bribery and corruption which Mr. Cornell disclosed in the machine management of 1871 had been going on for many years; and for a considerable time under the direct supremacy of himself or the Republican State Committee of which he was chairman, and Mr. Conkling as the ruling spirit. The more independent journals and voters had long charged these abuses as specifically as they now charge those that still survive, and which have finally led to the "Independent Movement" in New York. But these complaints had no more effect upon the party managers than have the later complaints upon the present disastrous party management. Nothing was done to remedy the corruption or the "farces," until the popular anger, aroused by the exposures of the Tweed and Connolly

pillage, which brought them before the public and made some reform of primaries necessary to self-preservation on the part of the machine politicians. They then did enough to temporarily delay the hostile attacks of the people, but only enough to make the present crisis inevitable. It is the misfortune and the peril of the Republican party that abuses, still protected by the partisan managers in New York—and without parallel elsewhere—have been allowed to grow, until the disaffected in its ranks apparently have the power of making a national triumph by the Republicans impossible. In the face of such evidence of the vicious character of the New York system of primaries, that system is still upheld by the party managers, and those who support it are put before the nation as constituting the Republican party of the State. Thus the partisan methods and the system of the political manipulators of New York have really become national questions.

## CHAPTER III.

THE ELECTION OF MR. CORNELL FOR GOVERNOR,  
WHAT IT TEACHES, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE  
INDEPENDENTS.

THE bearing of what has been said upon Mr. Cornell's election for governor last fall is apparent. There are some reasons which, in the minds of the Independents, at least, identify Mr. Conkling, and, to some extent, General Grant, with that election. Mr. Cornell was made naval officer of the port of New York by President Grant, from which office, against the desperate opposition of Mr. Conkling, he was removed, for reasons claimed to be a reflection upon the policy of General Grant's administration. The election of Mr. Cornell as governor was (as they think) intended as a censure upon the Civil Service policy of the present administration, and as a justification of Mr. Conkling, and of the abandonment of the reform measures inaugurated by President Grant.

We need not until later advert to that policy, the execution of which has certainly been very defective. It

is enough for us that Mr. Cornell's nomination was emphatically made by the party machine engineers, under the instructions of Mr. Conkling and the subordinate leadership of Mr. Arthur, the lately-removed collector at New York. The decisive points, raised by that nomination within the Republican ranks, were partisan methods and machine management under the leadership of Mr. Conkling on one side, as against the free, open policy and the absolute fidelity to reform principles which all the better class of voters demand. It was not a question as to how many New York Republicans prefer the spoils system to a reform in the Civil Service, but as to how many of them would, as a first instance, openly bolt from the party rather than longer maintain the Conkling-Cornell partisan system. The official term of the new governor being for three years, and the authority of his office touching the daily life of citizens at many more points than that of a President, it was with correspondingly greater risks that citizens encountered the enmity of the governor by standing on principle and duty against his election. Yet there were early and broadly spread manifestations of dissent, and possible opposition on the part of the more Independent Republicans. Mr. Cornell was of course sure of the lower and more partisan vote, because it has long been trained in subserviency, and for many years he had been the first assistant at the party machine. Party discipline and subordination in New

York are the most complete in the country. The journals warned the leaders of peril from the growing disaffection in the party. But the leaders were equally blind and audacious. The fact that refusals to vote had before been unknown, except in very rare cases at unofficial elections, and that it would require extraordinary courage and independence to first put in practice a theory, which (at first view at least) would be repugnant to the conventional obligations of good citizenship, probably emboldened the party leaders.

I believe there was not a Republican paper in the city of New York of any standing that did not treat the nomination as unwise, and many, if not the majority, of the leading papers in the interior held the same view. Still, however broad-spread was the disaffection, it was without organization, without leaders, and without a knowledge of its own strength.

Let us glance at the proceedings of the convention which nominated Mr. Cornell. It was held at Saratoga, September 3d, 1879. The proceedings are instructive, not merely in the light of principles, but as showing how far the party leaders knew the feelings of the people. That no effort was spared by Mr. Cornell, so long at the head of the Republican organization, or by his champion, Mr. Conkling, to secure the election of delegates at the primaries who should be safely pledged, may be assumed. We shall soon see what those primaries can now do as plainly as we have seen

what they have done in past years. Yet the action of the delegates appears to have been doubtful until the last moment. The New York *Times* declares that "in the early morning (of the day of the convention) it appeared to many of the best-informed politicians that the majority of the delegates would vote for some opposition candidates rather than for Mr. Cornell." Later in the day, however, the influences favorable to the ex-naval officer seemed to gain the mastery, and his most powerful opponent was persuaded to withdraw. Mr. Conkling was called to the chair. Still "the nomination of Mr. Cornell," says the report, was received by "cheers *drowned by hisses*." Mr. Wheeler, the Vice-President of the United States, voted for another candidate. There were 450 votes to be cast, of which 226 were necessary to a choice. Mr. Cornell received 234 votes, or *only eight more than the required majority*. Now it is important to bear in mind that these eight votes measure not the strength of the preference among the Republican voters of the State as between the issues involved in the approaching election, but the majority—*coming wholly from the city of New York*—of the Conkling-Cornell or machine element in a body of delegates selected by methods and in city primaries, the character of which we shall soon see. The *Times* report declares that the applause for Mr. Curtis, the reformer, was "second only to that which greeted reference to General Grant," and that "similar sympa-

thy " was expressed with Mr. Wheeler when he complimented President Hayes.

The dominating spirit of the convention was very manifest. In a long speech of two columns by Vice-President Wheeler, he devoted to the policy of the present administration, and all in connection with the supply bill, just *eight lines*, which contain a compliment to President Hayes. Shall we consider this as all which the Vice-President had in his heart to say in a Republican convention concerning a Republican administration, or was he remarkably prudent ?

As nobody else, except Mr. Conkling, made a speech, that spirit was not further disturbed. In that speech, and in the resolutions of the convention, the national administration and all the great principles to which the Cincinnati Convention pledged it, are as utterly ignored as if they only concerned Ethiopia or antediluvian ages. Everything else said and done were in tone and arrangement in open defiance and contempt of those fundamental principles of support and subordination which, to the extent that principle and self-respect will allow, are the very conditions of all strength and harmony in party action. The managers, so far from allowing the party in this convention to present itself in its true attitude as a part of the Republican party of the nation, recognizing a duty of fidelity to its principles, and of, at least, formal respect toward those whom the party had selected to lead it, took from the outset a

defiant and self-asserting position as unmistakably hostile and rebellious as that of the Japanese Prince Satsuma, when he hoisted his own flag in place of that of the Emperor over the forts of his principality.

But if their purpose was very clear, the foresight of the managers was very obscure. We need only glance at the Senator's speech to see how complete was his delusion as to this defiant attitude being acceptable to the people of New York. "The party," he says, "is *united* on every living issue. . . . There will be no *inaction or neglect* this year. The duty is too high and urgent. . . . The people will not fold their hands."

This was the assured tone, when he was on the very brink of the first chasm of disunion, the first inaction and neglect to vote, the first folding of hands and refusing to go to the polls ever known in the Republican party of New York. There were thousands who could foresee, not only these facts, but that their causes and the perils of the position were greatly increased by the course pursued by Mr. Conkling himself.

There is no need to go into any details about the canvass. Mr. Sherman, though he had not then announced himself as a presidential candidate, was kind enough to leave the Treasury in order to deliver speeches in aid of making a man Governor of New York whom he had just declared to be unfit to be even a naval officer! Mr. Evarts also came all the way from Washington to make a speech, for reasons as enigmat-



ical as the speech proved to be ineffective. We shall find the people to have been too much bent on rebuking machine despotism and infidelity to principles to be diverted either by Treasury influence or diplomatic oratory.

And now for the Independents. Their action plainly enough shows that they recognized, in the selection of Mr. Cornell, questions that reached far beyond the executive chair of New York, or any interests of that State alone. Their organization appears not to have been merely for a gubernatorial campaign. The principles which the platform embodies are almost wholly national, and they clearly suggest national elections.

Their revised platform, in principle unchanged, is given in the appendix.

If the Independents are not to be considered as utterly blind, inconstant, or dishonest, they cannot be looked upon as having committed themselves to principles, in the State election, to which they did not intend to adhere in national elections, where these principles will be not merely collaterally, but directly involved.

Further on we will survey more generally their constitution or platform. It will suffice now to call attention to the Articles III. and IV., from which it appears not only that they intend "to oppose, at the primaries, the making of bad nominations in local elections," and to work "in co-operation with those holding like offices elsewhere;" but they will labor to defeat "any *general*

Republican candidate whom they do "not deem fit." Here is a plain reference to presidential elections and affiliated organizations in other States. It is worthy of notice that Article III. declares it to be a duty "to *vote against* unfit men as the *only* means of obtaining good ones." Yet in fact their first political act, and the one by which they are best known, was a refusal of a large portion of them to vote at all. Probably, not voting at all, is considered among the implied means of defeating bad candidates and of resisting their own party, when it no longer "represents its professed principles in its practical workings." Nevertheless, their constitution, taken literally, is inconsistent on this important point. But these matters are not material. The Independents resolved, for the reasons already set forth, to oppose Mr. Cornell. They further decided not to vote for the Republican candidate for State engineer.

Here, therefore, we have an original theory and precedent of political action, an organized body of Republicans, with no candidates, and no machine, and no funds of their own—with no peculiar party platform of their own; but standing on that of the Republican party pointedly reaffirmed, proposing to act in a certain sense, in revolutionary manner; yet in a way clearly defined, and openly avowed by a body of highly intelligent and well-known men. They arraign before the bar of public opinion two of the candidates of a

great party, one of them substantially because he and the party leaders who back him sustain the Machine, and have been unfaithful to the Civil Service Reform policy which the Republican party proclaimed in 1876, and which Senator Conkling has steadily opposed—the other because he had not—as, on no very strong evidence, they seem to have believed—such a character or reputation as the party ought to approve.

In the eyes of an ordinary politician, the chances that this new combatant, in the great battle-field of politics, would materially affect the contest, were indeed contemplatable. Even those who know something of the vast unorganized, intellectual and moral forces in a State, of the indignant discontent outside the partisan lines, could hardly have expected much from an extemporized, undisciplined, half-organized battalion, without trained leaders or political experience. I will not now consider whether the policy pursued was justifiable or sagacious; but it should here be noticed, that the only elements of power and cohesion in the new movement were the pervading disaffection with the management of the Republican party, and a resolute devotion to its principles, on the part of those who confronted its leaders in order as they claim to save its character:

II. Let us now go to the returns of the election in November last. The reader must be patient with some figures, as they alone can teach the lesson Republicans

need to learn. We will first consider the case of the State engineer:

Seymour, Dem., had.....	439,681	votes.
Soule, Rep.       “ .....	427,240	“
	<hr/>	
Difference.....	12,441	“

There was a Greenback vote for a separate candidate of a little over 20,000 made up in very uncertain proportions of Republicans and Democrats. There were also a small prohibition vote, and a few hundreds of scattering votes, being about the same number in the case of every other State officer voted for. The 12,441 majority for Seymour would seem, therefore, to show the number of Independents who acted on the reports against Soule.

By that majority, Mr. Soule was defeated and Mr. Seymour was elected. The Republicans elected a lieutenant-governor, secretary of State, treasurer, and attorney-general by very small pluralities; that for lieutenant-governor being only 290 votes, so equally are the voters divided.

#### VOTES FOR GOVERNOR.

Cornell, Repub., had.....	418,567
Robinson, Dem., “ .....	375,790
Kelly, Dem.,       “ .....	77,566

Making the entire Dem. vote.....	453,356
And the whole Repub. vote.....	418,567
	<hr/>
And a Democratic majority of.....	34,789

It will be noticed that the aggregate Democratic vote for governor exceeded the Democratic vote for Seymour for engineer, by 13,675 votes. Now, as this vote for Seymour was the largest Democratic vote for any one officer (by nearly 4,000), and as the Greenback vote for governor was more than 2,000 smaller than it was for State engineer, it is plain that the Greenback votes are more inclined to go with the Democrats than with the Republicans—at least when machine Republicans are the candidates offered them. The Republican candidate for secretary of State (Wadsworth, a worthy son of the lamented general of that name, who was an original Republican, and highly popular with the best men of his party) received the largest vote of any Republican candidate, as follows: Wadsworth, Repub., 438,253; Olcott, Dem., 432,325: Repub. majority, 5,928. This 5,928 votes is all the majority the Republicans could secure for the office of Controller with a first-class candidate on their side, and an average candidate on the part of the Democrats. But, if we compare the Democratic vote for a first-class candidate (Seymour, who deserves and has inherited the popularity of his uncle, Horatio Seymour) with the Repub-

lican vote for an equally popular candidate, this is the admonishing result: Seymour, 439,681; Wadsworth, 438,253: a Democratic majority of 1,428. To make it clear how much really depended on the high character of the candidate, I will add, that the Greenback vote, as against Wadsworth, was 22,572; and against Seymour, 22,779, and that the scattering votes did not vary greatly in the two cases, though there were nearly 2,000 less against Wadsworth than against Seymour, thus showing that Wadsworth most nearly combined the full strength of his party.

It is, therefore, too plain for question, on the basis of this election, that unless the Republicans can, *not only unite all their votes, but increase their relative number in the coming canvass, they cannot carry the State of New York.*

III. Let us now return to the vote for governor, comparing the vote of Cornell with that of Soule, defeated by reason of a challenged reputation. It stands thus:

Soule.....	427,240
Cornell.....	418,567

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Cornell more objectionable than Soule by 8,673 votes.

Comparing the vote of Cornell with that of Wadsworth, the candidate on the Republican ticket, least

identified with the Conkling-Cornell insubordination and spoils system, it stood thus:\*

Wadsworth .....	438,253
Cornell .....	418,567

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Or a loss by Cornell of..... 19,686 votes.

At least these 19,686 Republicans *who went to the polls and voted for Wadsworth*, and might have cast their vote for Mr. Cornell, refused to do so.

But we have seen that Cornell fell short of the aggregate of his two adversaries for governor by 34,789 votes; that is, there were apparently (34,789, less 19,686) 14,103 more votes cast for the Democratic candidates than it was possible for them to get *otherwise than from Republican voters!* How is this result to be accounted for? If, again, we compare the highest Democratic vote for any office, that for Seymour, with the aggregate Democratic vote for governor, the result is as follows: aggregate for governor, 453,356; Seymour, 439,681; difference, 13,675.

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\* It may be mentioned here that the aggregate Republican vote last fall was about 72,000 less than it had been in 1876, when Morgan received 489,371 votes, and that the Democratic vote was about 67,000 less than the vote by which Robinson, Democrat, was elected governor in 1876. These facts do not, however, appear to be very material to the questions before us, further than as seeming to show less inclination on the part of Republicans than of Democrats to go to the polls.

The apparent Republican vote for one of the Democratic candidates for governor is, therefore, in this way, shown to have been 13,675, or only 428 votes different from the result derivable from the direct gubernatorial vote. One of these two things therefore is certain, either that these 13,675 Democrats *went to the polls and voted for governor and not for any other Democratic candidate*, or that 14,103 of the 19,686 Republicans, who *scratched* Cornell, also substituted Robinson or Kelly (and unquestionably the former,) in the place of Cornell, to make their disgust more emphatic. I cannot doubt the latter is the true explanation. These, I think, must therefore be accepted as the decisive facts, that while it is certain that 20,000 (accurately 19,686) *Republicans who went to the polls last November and voted for Mr. Wadsworth, refused to vote for Mr. Cornell*; it is almost as certain that about 14,000 Republicans did after scratching Cornell, *actually vote the Democratic ticket for governor with the deliberate intent of defeating the Republican machine candidate for that office.*

We have, therefore, to go into the presidential election with the facts plainly before us, that, in November last, there were 20,000\* voters in New York resolved to stand absolutely on the principles of their party and against candidates who dishonor them; and that there were about 14,000 of them who were so exas-

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\* I shall use the round numbers so nearly accurate.



perated as to prefer a Republican defeat to what they regard as disgraceful treachery to party pledges and a ruinous submission to machine management.

I think no candid man, knowing the tendency of public sentiment in the State since last November, will regard this dissent and exasperation as having subsided since that date, but quite the contrary. It has not only grown, but spread beyond the State and become better organized and more outspoken and aggressive. The encouragement given to the Independents, by the result of their first effort, has increased their confidence. They say that, before they had shown the large numbers ready to stand together upon their platform, persons only timidly Independent, and dreading a ridiculous minority, voted, with great compunction, the whole ticket. They will not do so again when the same principles will be more directly involved in the presidential election, and they are sure of so many thousands being with them.

III. But it is important to look further into the returns, and see from what part of the State and from what classes these 20,000 votes against the machine system came. If they came from only a disaffected section, or from a limited class, or from personal enemies of Mr. Cornell and Mr. Conkling, their importance would be much less. But if they came from every part of the State and from the most intelligent classes, and have a great volume of growing public opinion behind them,

they may have somewhat of the significance of the first combination, which, beginning a generation ago, finally divided the Democrats, and gave birth to the Republican party itself.

Let us look into the facts. The *Times* (of Nov. 25), after going over the returns, says "they show that the disaffection was *confined to no section*, but its effects "were most serious in the cities; as Utica (the residence of Mr. Conkling), Syracuse, New York, Oswego, "Rochester and Brooklyn;" and again, speaking of the vote in Brooklyn, it says: "These figures show, in "the plainest possible fashion, that not only was Mr. "Cornell scratched, by at least 2,855 *Republican voters*, "but that a certain number of *Republicans voted directly* "for one or the other of the *Democratic candidates*, . . . "something which could not have happened with an "acceptable Republican candidate."

It was of course natural that the disaffection should be stronger in the great cities where the machine politics are most clearly seen to tend to tyranny and corruption; but if it were worth while to take the space, it could be shown that in every part of the State, every county, if not in every town and village, the popular indignation was expressed at the polls, not against Mr. Cornell as an individual, but against the policy and system he represents. For example, the Republican vote was on an average through the State last fall about 11 per cent. below that for Governor Morgan, in 1876; yet

in one of the strongest agricultural and Republican counties, St. Lawrence, Cornell's vote was 13 per cent. below that of Morgan in 1876; in Cayuga and Wayne it was 14 per cent.; in Chatauqua it was 18 per cent.; in Oswego, 25 per cent.; in Cattaraugus and Rensselaer counties, 12 per cent. below that of Morgan. So inexorable was the spirit of hostility that in Utica and Oneida County, where Mr. Conkling lives, Mr. Cornell ran behind Wadsworth 279 votes on the city ticket, and 727 on the county ticket, and in Tompkins, where Cornell University, endowed by the brother of the Governor, calls for gratitude, he nevertheless is behind 116 votes.

*Vote of New York City.*—It will be instructive to look into the vote of a single city, that of New York, the headquarters both of the machine and of the Independents:

VOTES\* FOR GOVERNOR IN NEW YORK CITY.

Cornell.....	46,322
Robinson.....	60,556
Kelly.....	43,947

Aggregate vote of Democratic candidates....104,503

For Comptroller in New York City, Wadsworth, Repub., 51,351; Olcott, Dem., 98,030.

Here we find Wadsworth running ahead of Cornell

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\* I have used the convenient compilation made through the enterprise and liberality of the New York *Tribune*, for which the thanks of its readers are due.

by 5,929 votes ; a ratio to Cornell's whole deficiency in the State somewhat larger than that of the population of the city to the population of the State. He was very nearly as much behind all the other State officers except the defeated Mr. Soule. The joint vote of Robinson and Kelly exceeds the Democratic vote for Olcott in the city by 6,474 votes, indicating that here again a large number of Republicans, apparently not less than 1,445, must have voted for either Robinson or Kelly (and doubtless for the former) in addition to refusing to vote for Cornell. It is the lesson of the State repeated in the city.

*Assembly Districts.*—If we next follow the Republican city vote into the assembly districts (for the city always sends a few Republican members of the assembly from the more enlightened districts) we shall find similar results. I select for the illustration the three assembly districts in which Republicans were elected by the largest majorities.

1. In the 11th Assembly District Varnum, the elected Repub. member, had 3,027 votes ; Cornell, for Governor, 2,669 votes ; difference, 358.

2. In the 21st Assembly District Mitchell, the elected Repub. member, had 3,167 votes ; Cornell, for Governor, 2,720 votes ; difference, 447.

3. In the 7th Assembly District Hayes, the elected Repub. member, had 4,207 votes ; Cornell, for Governor, 3,615 votes ; difference, 592.

In these three districts, the vote for Wadsworth was even greater than the aggregate Republican vote for assemblymen, and hence more to the disadvantage of Mr. Cornell.

Therefore in these three strongest Republican districts alone, where so great a proportion of the leading Republicans live, we find that 1,397 persons, tested by the assembly vote, and more than 1,600 as tested by Wadsworth's vote, refused to vote for Cornell—*being more in these three Republican districts alone than one fourth of all those in the city who so refused*; and although the population of these three (out of the 24 city assembly) districts but slightly exceeds a *sixth* part of the population of the city. The same significant fact may be put in another form. In these three districts, Wadsworth received 10,968 votes. Of these more than 1,600 refused to vote for Cornell. *That is, more than at the rate of one Republican voter out of every seven Republicans who voted for Wadsworth for comptroller, in the three districts, refused to vote for the machine, spoils-system candidate for governor!* I will not fatigue the reader with the figures required to show from the returns—as I could easily show—that at least *one out of every four* of these who so refused to vote for Cornell actually went further and voted for Robinson or Kelly for governor.

Now, let us turn from these Republican strongholds to the *three* most benighted of the 24 city assembly dis-

tricts—to districts where whisky, bigotry, ignorance and the basest forms of demagogism give the largest Democratic majorities, and see what lesson is taught by the returns. They are the 1st, the 2d and the 4th assembly districts, and the vote in them was as follows :

	Cornell.	For Governor, Robinson.	Kelly.	For Comptroller, Wadsworth.
1st,	988	2,135	2,017	1,041
2d,	728	1,819	2,405	799
4th,	810	2,143	3,140	875
	<hr/> 2,526	<hr/> 6,097	<hr/> 7,562	<hr/> 2,715

It will be noticed that the entire Republican vote in two of these three districts is but little more than the votes Cornell lost in the three best Republican districts.

Here, at most, are but 2,715 Republicans dwelling among 13,695 Democrats, and among such a population Wadsworth is ahead of Cornell by only 189 votes in 2,715 voters, that is only about *one* out of 15 who voted for Wadsworth refused to vote for Cornell—a ratio less than one-half as great as we have found so refusing in the three districts where the better educated and conditioned class of Republicans reside. Here, therefore, we see the fact apparently established that the disaffection in the Republican party *is greatest among its more intelligent supporters, and least among those whose condition is nearest that of the common grade of tenement-house and grog-shop Democrats.*

But these apparent facts will be made certain if the

reader will have the patience to look into a few more figures.

*Election Districts.*—Each of these assembly districts of the city is divided into some twenty-five to thirty-five election districts. There are whole election districts in the city so degraded that hardly a Republican will reside there. Let us look into the returns of the very worst—the very nadirs of civilization—where the highest party principles and the spoils system—the machine and the gin-shops—the laws of Moses and the laws of the cockpit and the prize-ring—John and Judas, and Arnold and Washington, are much the same.

I. The very smallest Republican vote was in the 19th election district, of the 14th assembly district, where Cornell has only *seven* votes and Wadsworth *exactly as many*. The next smallest was in the 9th election of the 4th assembly district, where Cornell had ten votes, and Wadsworth *exactly as many*. In 6th and 8th election of the same assembly district, where Cornell had in the aggregate only 23 votes and Mr. Wadsworth only 24. But, on the other hand, in the 7th election of the 1st assembly district Cornell had 16 votes, Wadsworth had only 15.

Among the very worst population, therefore, where Democrats are to Republicans as twenty or thirty to one, Mr. Cornell and the machine were alike unobjectionable. Wadsworth does not gain nor Cornell lose a single vote. But, just in proportion as the virtue and

intelligence, and consequently the number and ratio of the Republican vote increase, we find the refusal to sustain Mr. Cornell and the machine growing to a still greater ratio. This fact may be made still more striking by the vote in those election districts, where the ratio of the Republicans to the Democrats is the *very largest*—where Kelly, the factionist, gets no more votes than Wadsworth did in the low districts last referred to. For example, in the 8th election of the 7th Assembly district, where Cornell had 101 votes to John Kelly's *only seventeen* votes, Wadsworth had 124—showing that about *one-fifth* of the Republican voters refused to support the machine candidate. In the 20th election of the 9th Assembly district, where Cornell had 123 votes to only *seven* for John Kelly, Wadsworth had 142, here showing that about *one-seventh* of the Republicans refused to support Cornell. So in the 9th and 14th election of the 21st Assembly districts, where Cornell had 280 votes to only 34 for John Kelly, Wadsworth had 322 votes. Analogous facts could be cited from many of the districts; thus demonstrating that into whatever part of the city, strong in the support of the Republican principles, we may look, the voters in rebellion against the machine increase in a ratio, much the same as they decrease, as we go down to the lowest grade of intelligence, *where they entirely disappear*.

While, therefore, it is clear that disaffection found expression at the polls in all save a few of the most



benighted of the more than seven hundred election districts, and that the measure and the strength of that disaffection increase with the intelligence and good condition of the people, are we not also, on similar grounds, compelled to believe, that those who sustained the Independent movement were the most thoughtful and self-respecting of the voters of the districts? Is it the intense partisans—is it the obsequious henchmen—is it the speculator in politics who looks for jobs and patronage which a new governor may bestow—is it the stolid and ignorant who know as little of the principles of the party as they do of the worth of its candidates, who are the first to make a stand on principles, and to refuse to support candidates whom they deem unworthy? Or is the most conscientious and intelligent of the people those who have the least to gain from the favor and least to fear from the anger of the leaders of politics?

At the risk of fatiguing the reader with so many figures, I have attempted to make plain the conclusion forced upon me, that the Independent Movement in New York is really a disaffection on the part of Republicans who are most distinguished for devotion to principles, for education, for social distinction, and for wealth and influence. The party is being undermined in the very citadel of its strength. For, where the Independent or disaffected vote has been shown to be the largest, are the homes of Republican ministers, writers,

and publishers whose audiences are millions scattered over every part of the Union—of Republicans in professional life who largely shape the political thought of the nation—of Republican bankers, merchants, manufacturers, and carriers, who, besides influencing hundreds of thousands in their employ, direct the material industry of half the continent. How long can any party maintain itself while persisting in a policy which thus drives into antagonism a great proportion of such men? One other reflection is worthy our notice. These results only confirm a truth long since considered as demonstrated in Great Britain, that, where fidelity to principles, freedom of elections, and self-respect in politics are at stake, it is the higher class of voters and not the lower, whose vote is in doubt. Theirs is the *floating* vote that will stay at home, or go from side to side, according to the merits of candidate or the prospect of fidelity to principles. The lower strata of voters are only disturbed in times of political commotion which threaten to make new parties. It is, we may plainly see, the 5,000 or 10,000 of the foremost class of Republican voters, or, in other words, the so-called Independent vote in New York, which will, in all probability, determine her majority, and hence the election of a President.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PLATFORM AND THEORIES OF THE INDEPENDENTS, AND THE PRACTICAL ISSUES THEY RAISE.

LET us next see what are the principles and practical aims of the Independents. The center of their activity, like that of the machine, is in the city of New York. They have lately, I believe, formed co-operating organizations in different sections of the State. Analogous associations are known to exist in Pennsylvania and in Massachusetts, and perhaps elsewhere. Attached to the printed constitution of the central association just issued, there is a "*statement of principles*," which I give in the appendix. The constitution further provides that "*any voter* residing in the city "of New York is eligible to membership"—except office-holders and candidates, and may by election become a member upon signing the constitution and paying the entrance fees. The membership may, therefore, extend to both political parties.

The "statement of principle" leaves little in doubt as to the theories or purposes of the Independents.

We need not stop to inquire whether they fully appreciate the importance of organization for practical work strictly within party lines. There has been much in the proscriptive partisanship of the New York primaries to disgust and drive away the more self-respecting citizens, and it is very likely the popular judgment falls short of justice to the self-sacrifice and useful devotion of time and thought, on the part of the some worthy men who do good service for the party in these primaries in connection with the elections. And we must not, because abuses have existed, and the primaries have been brought into bad repute, forget the needs they may supply, or the zeal they may inspire when properly managed. Their statement commits the Independents to the Republican national platform of 1876, and to the views of the last annual message of President Hayes.

And here comes into prominence, at the outset, this vital fact, that the real issue between the Independents and the partisan managers of New York is this: whether it is the duty of the Republican voters in that State *to adhere to that platform, and to the policy of the administration, which the national party placed upon that platform, or to follow the New York machine, directed by Mr. Conkling and Mr. Cornell into rebellion, and to help them force the next national convention into an acceptance of the terms, which New York under their lead may attempt to dictate?*

It is worthy of notice that the declaration of principles—so far as they seem applicable to the general government at least—does not lay down any dogmas or methods to which the Independents demand the adhesion of the party. No candidate is nominated. They simply declare their own purpose to maintain the avowed principles of their party, and to oppose all candidates who are unfaithful to those principles. They are not open to any charge of insisting that the majority shall yield to a minority ; but, on the contrary, they insist that the majority and the minority are bound alike to be faithful to the platform which the national convention has adopted, and to the administration which the national majority has elected. These, then, are the vital questions. They bring the Independents into the broadest antagonism with the machine politicians. Will the Republican party recede from the platform of 1876? Will it repudiate the interpretation of that platform made by the present administration? Will it accept the peculiar New York system as expounded and applied by Mr. Conkling, Mr. Cornell, and their subordinates? These questions seem to involve the vote of the Independents.

Let us look further at their principles.

1. They adhere to the views and pledges of the Republican party upon the Southern question. By all legal means, the rights of the colored voters must be protected, and the constitutional authority of Congress

and of the executive must be exercised for the protection of the equal rights of all in the Southern States.

2. Those sound financial principles to which the great body of Republicans are committed, are so clearly set forth that there can be no fear of antagonism in New York on the subject.

3. They demand fidelity to the civil service reform commitments of the party. But their enlargement on this subject, and the very definite statements upon several points, show that the *main issue* between the Independents and the machine arises upon the subject of reform in the public service.

One of the Independents' novel methods—that of not voting—is well calculated to arrest attention. It illustrates the facility with which, without funds and without much labor, any body of men, large or small, may, by the mere force of common convictions and common *inaction*, make themselves felt to the full extent due to their members and their character, in every political canvass where the party majorities are small. That the method is capable of grave and easy abuse is apparent. Men seeking to evade their political duties may speciously assume the respectable reasons of those true Independents, who from patriotic and conscientious convictions refuse to vote, just as selfish office-seekers may work hard at the primaries, really for spoils, but under the pretense of serving the party and the people.

A refusal to vote at all, as the end of all discussion

and action, considered in itself, at first seems both barren and mean; but we may readily see that its real character and utility depend upon the motive and the effect. To refuse to vote may be the neglect of a sluggard, the cowardice of a hypocrite, or the shift of a demagogue. It may, on the other hand, illustrate the strength of patriotic devotion to principles, and the courage and conscience needed to confront the frown of a party and the appeals of friends. In the very nature of things, unless when acting secretly, no man is likely to refuse to go with his party except from honorable and manly motives.

The experience of Mr. Cornell has shown us what may be the consequences of putting in practice the theory of not voting at all—how easily indeed it may determine the vote of New York, and consequently the next presidential election. There are elements and possibilities connected with the application of this new mode of exerting or withholding political influence which deserve careful attention, and extend far beyond the scope of these pages.

The highest obligation which can pertain to the elective franchise is that it shall be used, if used at all, for the public good, and that reason equally requires a refusal to vote whenever, to the mind of the voter, a refusal appears the best way to serve the public. There can be no duty to vote when voting cannot be shown to be more useful than not to vote. In deciding on

the effect of a refusal, we must regard the proximate and remote as well as the direct consequences.

Perhaps if we look carefully into the working of our elective system, we shall find that the certainty with which partisan manipulators have counted on the vote of good citizens for bad candidates, and the constancy with which those citizens have justified such confidence, have lowered the moral tone of nominations, and strengthened the lower at the expense of the higher elements in politics. The intriguing office seekers, the liquor sellers, the lottery dealers, the gamblers, and even the thieves—in one sphere of life—and the Catholics and the Jesuits in another, have long since organized their voters, and boldly told the party leaders that they will be withheld or used against them, unless their terms shall be complied with. Such examples are of course no justification for others using similar means for no better ends. But may not good men plant themselves on the principles of their party, and refuse to vote for candidates in open rebellion toward these principles, or shown to be morally unfit for the offices for which they are nominated? Are the men of principle and conscience always to be put upon the lists of the party managers as certain to vote for every bad nomination, and to stand upon every vicious platform, while these managers give themselves to corrupt bargains for gaining the votes of every venal class? It is worth remembering that it



was the refusal of a few good men of his party to vote for Aaron Burr that prevented his being made governor of New York in 1804. So far from their being a ground for doubt on such points of duty, there is just cause for alarm, when a sense of party obligation—or mere partisan subserviency—has become so irrational and controlling that we forget both the paramount need of worthy officers and the supreme duty of fidelity to principles and to conscience. What can be more irrational and illogical—not to say absurd—than to insist that a good citizen is bound to support a candidate he holds to be unfit for office, or to repudiate principles which he believes to be essential to the welfare of his country?

It may be said that the voter has but a choice between two bad candidates or two bad platforms, and that not to vote for what he thinks the better, in the particular case, will be more mischievous than not to vote at all. The decision may in some cases be difficult. But is it clear, in the light of history or upon principle, that when only Clodius and Milo are up for office, Cicero and his followers will not best serve the republic by opposing both? The full effect of a refusal to vote for a bad candidate is not measured by its influences on a present election. It may bring about better nominations. It may give greater influence to good character and sound principles, by showing the respect in which they are held by the best citizens.

Servility in voting is surely not a patriotic virtue. On the other hand, no good citizen will capriciously refuse to vote, or will vote or refuse to vote without carefully considering the ultimate bearings of his decision.

Who can doubt that, in many, if not most elections—city, State, or national—when parties are nearly equally divided, a small body of honest, intelligent and courageous voters, standing together and voting, *or refusing to vote*, as they may think best, may be a great power—a far greater power than by merging and losing themselves in some party majority—in behalf of worthy nominations and vital principles? The conditions they demand as well as those demanded from the grog-shops and the other dens of infamy, will be taken into account by those who manage the parties. Who cannot see that, in the same way, a few faithful senators, State or national, standing conscientiously together—if need be against the clamors of the party chiefs—for adequate qualifications, might soon raise the standard of confirmations for the public service? To dare to be in the right with two or three may demand the firmness of a hero; to oppose one's party, or to refuse to vote at all, is pretty sure to require more courage if not more principle than to vote with it. Without pursuing the point further we may, I think, see that it is quite possible, on the highest grounds of reason and of patriotism, under various circumstances, to refuse to vote, with great benefit to the country. The only ground upon which

the position of the Independents can be attacked, is by showing that, in the case in hand, they will best serve the country by voting the Republican ticket.

Still, it must not be forgotten that the direct object is to secure their votes, and not to weigh the merits of their theories. And it seems clear enough, from their declarations and past action, that their votes can be counted on only in case the candidates and platform shall be in keeping with the administrative reform policy and pledges of the party. Their whole platform shows very plainly that the most practical and serious issue they will make, in the coming elections, turns, ultimately, upon the question of Civil Service Reform. On that subject, they demand that the platform pledges of 1876, as explained by President Hayes, shall be carried out in practice; and for that reason we shall recur to the subject, and show what the Republican pledges really are.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE ORIGINAL AND PECULIAR "MACHINE" AND SPOILS · SYSTEM OF NEW YORK.—BURR, VAN BUREN, JACKSON.

THE principles, as well as the character and numbers, of those who have thus far supported the Independent movement, are now sufficiently clear. But has the movement any other claim upon national attention? Is the threatened division of the Republican party, in New York, founded upon a state of facts so much like those which exist in other States that it may be intelligently dealt with merely in the light of their experience? Is the disaffection in New York only such as, in the ordinary course of political action, may arise anywhere, and which may be expected, very soon, to subside without material prejudice to the Republican party?

An adequate answer to these questions can only be given by all that follows. But I can state my own conclusions in few words and without hesitation. The situation in New York cannot be wisely judged from the

experience of any other State, except to some extent from that of Pennsylvania. The journals, therefore,—and especially those outside of Pennsylvania—which discuss New York politics, merely on the basis of their home affairs, are greatly liable to be misled. The organized disaffection which now exists in New York is only a more advanced stage of what has long been growing, and if it be not removed, it is likely to become far more formidable and aggressive. Those who refuse to regard themselves as represented or bound by the delegates chosen at the primaries, especially in the city, or to join or co-operate with those organizations, do so for reasons that do not in similar strength exist in other States. The political methods and theories of New York—the indigenous “machine” and spoils system of the State—are more destructive of freedom in politics, more proscriptive, more tyrannical, more degrading, and intolerable to the better class of citizenship, than anything of the kind which has ever existed either under the general government or that of any State (at least any Northern State) of the Union.

Such statements ought to be supported by facts.

The mere fact that notoriously there has been within the State of New York more political intrigue from that of Burr to that of Tilden, than in any other State; the facts that in custom-houses, post-offices, city halls, and other offices of every kind there has been perhaps as much pillage, fraud, and scandal as in all the other

Northern States together; the further facts that from the time of Burr and the Albany Regency to the present moment there has been (in part coming from the Democrats to the Republicans, and in part of more modern growth), an arrogant, secret, centralized power which has tyrannized at the primaries, invaded the freedom of elections, coerced appointments, and domineered in conventions; and the further facts that this central power has so far made politics a profession, and has so widely separated politicians from the confidence and respect of the people as to have become notorious throughout the Union—such facts should certainly have prepared us for an anomalous political condition and organization in the State of New York.

We must glance, historically, at their causes and their development. We can then better understand what is meant by the “machine,” and the spirit of the rebellion against it.

Aaron Burr, of New York, was the original arch intriguer and partisan despot of our politics. The first steps toward the degradation of national authority for personal and partisan objects were taken under his advice. He laid the foundation of the machine and the spoils system of New York politics which have ever since, in forms more or less aggravated, been its curse and its opprobrium. The language in which the historian has explained Burr’s system is equally applicable to the theory and practice of the partisan

managers of both parties in New York at the present moment.

“Among the maxims of Colonel Burr for the guidance of politicians one of the most prominent was “that the people at elections were to be *managed by the same rules of discipline as the soldiers of an army*; that “a few leaders were to think for the masses, and that the “latter were to *obey implicitly their leaders*, and to move “only at the word of command. He had, therefore, “great confidence in the *machinery* of party, and that “system of regular nominations in American politics of “which he may, perhaps, be considered one of the “founders. Educated as a military man, and imbibing “his early views with regard to governing others in the “camp, it is not surprising that Colonel Burr should “have applied the rules of *military* life to politics, and “always inculcated the importance of discipline in the “ranks of a party. In no part of the United States “have these party rules been more constantly and “rigidly enforced than among the Democrats of the “State of New York.” \*

We shall soon see to what extent the New York primaries for selecting delegates to the Utica Convention, and the proceeding of that convention for selecting delegates to Chicago are based on Burr's system. Nor is it wholly unimportant that the friends of a military system prefer a military leader.

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\* Statesman's Manual, vol. ii. p. 1139.

Burr put his degrading system into practice in New York, and so far as he was able, during his short career, he also extended it to national affairs. So successful had he been in propagating his views among the federal officers in New York City that as early as 1820—I believe the first instance of the kind in our politics—De Witt Clinton, in a message as Governor of New York, felt compelled to complain “of an *organised and disciplined* corps of federal officers interfering in State elections, and of alarming attempts upon the purity and independence of the local governments.”\* Had Burr been elected President, and his system been made supreme in national affairs at so early a period, who can tell how disastrous might have been the consequences?

Martin Van Buren early became interested with Burr, and was quick to see, and apt in adopting the machine-spoils system which Burr had devised. He made that system supreme in the State of New York, and by means of it became governor. Before 1820, almost before manipulation, proscription, and barbarism in politics had been known in other States, the peculiar intrigue and vindictiveness of the partisan leaders of New York had become notorious. Her peculiar system (says the historian), “had nourished faction, and frequently “produced a state of feeling in the public mind, which “threatened the dissolution of the bands which unite

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\* Jenkins's History of Political Parties in N. Y., p. 227.



“together a civilized and Christian community . . .  
“*party spirit had raged in this more than in any other*  
“*State of the Union.*” \*

One of the closest students of American politics, Mr. Gale, of the *National Intelligencer*, declared in 1822, that there was already “*something peculiar*” in political distinctions in New York.†

“In the county of Mr. Van Buren’s residence, political dissensions were carried to the *greatest extremities.*” ‡

In 1822 we find Mr. Van Buren in Washington, urging the appointment of a postmaster at Albany, on mere partisan grounds; perhaps the earliest example of a distinguished man degrading himself to that kind of proscription. Only two years later, the same partisan machine influence had grown so audacious and unscrupulous that, “on the last day of the session a few hours, perhaps I may say *minutes*, before the time fixed for adjournment, a resolution was proposed, and “*instantly passed*” (says the historian), for the removal from the office of canal commissioner, of De Witt Clinton, who was then serving gratuitously upon the Erie Canal, for the conception and construction of which the State was indebted to his genius. There was no charge of delinquency, there was no pretense

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\* Hammond’s Political History of New York, vol. ii., p. 78.

† *Ibid.*, p. 87.

‡ Statesman’s Manual, vol. ii., p. 1440.

he had not served the State in a manner worthy of his great name and ability. Only the pretended right of arbitrary removal—the demand of spoils, and the need of spoils by the party—could be alleged as a cause. It may be noted in passing that Alfred Conkling, the father of the present Senator Conkling, drew the resolutions expressive of popular disapproval of that partisan outrage, thus helping to render irresistible that higher and indignant public opinion, which within two years made De Witt Clinton governor of the State. The demand for spoils, to which Clinton was sacrificed, was then—long before it had appeared in national politics—about as mercilessly applied, through all the grades of State and municipal offices in New York, as it is now being applied by Governor Cornell.

The Tammany Society—Tammany Hall—originally a social and patriotic organization, founded in 1789, in the first month of the administration of Washington, and incorporated in 1805, had early in the political career of Van Buren, degenerated into a mere political machine. In 1822 it began active interference with politics, and in 1827 it dominated the primary elections. It was the *first*, and, so far as I know, it is to this day the only instance of a State allowing the corporate franchises and privileges it has conferred, and property acquired through such franchises, to be used in aid of the coercion of elections, and of the domination of a secret partisan clique. Its anniversary had even become

a city holiday. Probably in no other State at that time would such a scandalous abuse of corporate functions have been tolerated—nor would they now be. And we have only to turn back to the extracts from Mr. Cornell's letter of 1871, already quoted, and to recall the bargain with Tammany of the last election, to surmise why such an abuse has so long continued in New York. This spoils system, thus devised by Burr, and matured and applied by Van Buren in New York, was transferred and set up by Van Buren at Washington to a limited extent in 1821, while he was senator, but, in all its parts, and with all its instant and infinite powers of mischief, in 1829, when he became secretary of State under President Jackson.

“The election of Jackson was notoriously the work  
“of Martin Van Buren, inspired by Aaron Burr, and  
“with his inauguration was introduced a sordidly sel-  
“fish political system entirely at variance with the  
“broad views of Washington and Hamilton.”\*

Mr. Jenkins, in his history, just quoted, says that Van Buren was condemned, even in New York, “for introducing the New York system at Washington.”

General Jackson brought to Washington the arbitrary, audacious, and relentless spirit which was but too ready to adopt—perhaps he was favored by New York politicians because he was expected willing to act upon—the New York system, with which Mr. Van Buren

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\* Atlantic Monthly, April, 1880.

was anxious to supply him. But Jackson was unfamiliar with such a system. It existed nowhere except in New York. Jackson had, in advice to Mr. Monroe and otherwise, repeatedly condemned partisan proscription. It is, therefore, both a mistake and an injustice to attribute to Jackson the origin of the spoils system. While more removals were made under Jackson than under Van Buren—because Mr. Van Buren found his favorites in office when he became President—it was under Van Buren, as Vice-President, or President from 1832 to 1840, that the system was perfected in national politics—perfected, naturally enough, only to fall before the better sentiment of the country in the election of Harrison to succeed the great engineer of the New York machine, in 1840. But so great was the pressure for office, which the introduction of the New York system had greatly increased, that it was one of the principal causes of President Harrison's early death.

What more natural than that the great machine manager of New York should have been the only member of the cabinet ready to make political capital out of discreditable attentions to the notorious Mrs. Eaton, using her malign influence with General Jackson so effectively that Mr. Webster declares that "the matter " may very probably determine who shall be successor " to the present chief magistrate."

It should however be said, to the credit of Mr. Van Buren, that when he decided to *put himself in nomina-*

tion for the presidency, he resigned his seat in the cabinet for that reason; thus avoiding embarrassment to the President, and the unseemly spectacle of holding on to the patronage of his office, while pretending he did not seek the votes of those whose places were, and for years might continue to be, at his mercy. The fact that the original introducer of the spoils system into national politics—the first man who ever nominated himself for the presidency—had scruples not felt by members of the cabinet who now propose themselves as presidential candidates, only illustrates the consequences of long familiarity with that system. Such was the contribution which New York made to national politics, in the only instance in which one of her politicians has been put at the head of national affairs (for Fillmore was only an accidental and *ex-officio* President); but that contribution so nearly worked a revolution, and has been found so prolific and persistent in mischievous effects, that the need of its removal has raised a new issue in party platforms—the very issue which now, as we have seen, threatens a disastrous division in New York itself. When next the voice of New York was potential in the national councils, it was in a great crisis and in behalf of great principles, and of the higher sentiment of the State, of which Mr. Seward was a fit representative. But now these principles are forgotten, that sentiment is unrepresented, and the attempt is made once more to give supremacy in the

councils of the nation to the machine spoils system of New York, which has survived, with all its pernicious vigor, in the State that gave it birth.

But I have not mentioned all the elements of originality in New York, in connection with the degradation of our politics. It was only a Congressman from New York who could, in 1833, without a blush, proclaim, on the floor of the national Senate, the infamous doctrine that "to the victor belong the spoils." Those New England editors who attempt to read lessons of wisdom to the country about New York politics, in the mere light of their own, will do well to remember that the peculiar sentiment which caused that declaration to be accepted by New York politicians, while it was heard with horror by Adams and Webster, yet survives in the partisan circles of the Empire State. The New York machine is as far ahead as ever of all other machines, which are only feeble imitations, lagging far behind, and equally deficient in the amount of the fuel, the power of the vehicle, and the recklessness of the engineers.

It was not merely the spoils system, in the sense which the Civil Service reformers speak of that system—as if only applicable to removals, appointments, and political assessments—which was earliest devised and put in practice in New York; but the whole of Burr's method of oligarchic tyranny, by which a few partisan leaders domineered, as they now domineer in New York

politics; deciding who shall be nominated, and where conventions shall be held, what they shall do, and what orders shall be given to the delegates; leaving the people only to obey and to vote. The *Albany Regency* and Tammany Hall each embodied that theory as absolutely as does the partisan machine of the present day. Louis XIV. and Bonaparte said, "I am the State." The Regency said—the machine yet says—"I am the party." Bonaparte said to Metternich, "All I want of the German Bund is men and money." They say to the people, All we want of you is votes and money.

Mr. Hammond\* says that, under the old regency or machine system, "All questions relative to the selection of candidates for elective offices, either by the people or the legislature, *were settled in caucus*, and every member of the party was in honor bound to support the decision of the assemblies." This was the Albany regency as led by Van Buren, "by the result of whose deliberations the Democratic party was governed," says Mr. Hammond. Such has always been the theory and practice of Tammany Hall which has superseded the regency. We shall soon see how this original New York device of being "in honor bound" to support whoever is nominated in a secret caucus of manipulators has been applied to the present New York primaries. Such was the theory and the system in perfection in 1835, which was then regarded "as the most

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\* Political History of N. Y., vol. ii., p. 429.

reliable and effective political organization ever contrived." It was controlled by men of distinguished ability—Martin Van Buren, William L. Marcy, Silas Wright, John A. Dix, A. C. Flagg, and others but little less able. The machine had not then been so long in use as to have made real statesmen impossible. There are now no such names in New York politics. It looked as if machine managers under leaders so able might retain power for a generation. But in less than five years the machine led them on to a defeat as easily as the Republican machine led the party to a defeat in New York in 1876, and may do so again this year if the causes of increasing disaffection shall not be dealt with in a statesmanlike spirit. We must examine the New York primaries before we can see how far the Republican machine of New York, at this moment, is a mere imitation of that of earlier times and of Tammany Hall itself.



## CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW YORK PRIMARIES, THEIR THEORY, THEIR  
PLEDGES, AND THEIR SUBSERVIENCY. THE PHILA-  
DELPHIA PRIMARIES. THE ALBANY PRIMARIES.

THE phrase "the primaries," so definite and familiar in New York, probably has neither a very accurate meaning nor much significance elsewhere. There can be no question about the importance of good primary organizations among the members of a party. They are essential to the full expression of its strength. They should be inviting to the voter, and well adapted for moving him to political activity. The supreme tests of membership should be fidelity to the principles of the party; and also the support of its worthy candidates to the extent that the conscientious convictions of the voter will permit. Their main purpose is to call forth and give expression to the opinions and preferences of the voters of the party, and not in the least to coerce them. The appeal and the argument by which opinions are influenced are to be made through larger meetings and the public press. The people go to these

smallest local meetings of a party to declare what they think and to order what they wish done. These meetings are for ascertaining what are the real opinions of the voters of the party, and not for the mere indorsement of nominations which a few managers have before made, or for an illusory approval of a predetermined policy. Free access to these primaries should, above all things, be extended *to every voter faithful—in a sense becoming a good citizen—to the principles and policy of his party.* The moment that privilege is denied at the primary meetings, they restrict rather than increase the numbers who will support a party. They tend to become the selfish agencies of those who, for unworthy ends, rapidly gain control of them, and they repel the better class of citizens. Every person who participates in a primary meeting, as well as every member of the party who does not, ought, if he can in good faith to his sense of public duty, to support the candidate agreed upon by the majority. But, if he believes the candidate of his party to be unfit, he should, as a good citizen, vote for the best candidate in the field, or not vote at all, as he may think most for the public interests.

These views will perhaps be accepted by those who do not believe in going with their party, right or wrong, or in securing success by means however reprehensible.

Let us look at the New York primaries in the light

of these principles. I shall draw special attention to those of the city only. If their organization is more complicated and their exhibition of the bad features of the system is more complete than elsewhere, it is to be remembered that the city system directly prevails among that one-fourth part of the population of the State by whom most political action is initiated, and in great measure controlled. Their spirit, though not their constitutions, are supreme generally in the State, except among the rural population who resist their degrading provisions. It is mainly from this rural population that the Republican party has drawn those more independent and high-toned delegates, and that more patriotic devotion to principles which have prevented the utter demoralization and decay in which any exclusively city management would long since have involved it. The regulation of these city primaries are a fair illustration of the peculiar spirit and methods of New York politics.

The 42 printed pages, filled with two specimen constitutions and regulations (and the names of delegates) of the city primaries, are highly suggestive of the complications and management with which these primaries are associated. There is no need to go much into detail.

In each of the 24 assembly districts, there is what is called a *district association*, under like constitutions. Every association sends delegates, from among its own members, to the *Central Republican Committee* of the

city. The authorities and duties of the Central Committee are very sweeping, being "to take care for the interests of the party in the city, and to endeavor to promote its harmony and efficiency." An executive committee of the Central Committee is given "the general management of the affairs of the Central Committee," . . . that is, in substance, *the whole authority of the Central Committee*. It is one of the rules of this executive committee that "all its proceedings shall be kept strictly secret,\* unless otherwise ordered, subject to the rights and duty of the chairman to report to the Central Committee all matters requiring action thereon." Practically, therefore, *the controlling power is secret and hence irresponsible*. How far such a rule is necessary to the proper management of a party, and how far it favors arbitrary and corrupt action, and inevitably contributes to the popular distrust and disaffection under which the party now suffers, we need not stop to consider. One would think that such a committee might do things occasionally that would bear the light. But the *rule of secrecy is absolute and universal!*

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\* This theory of secrecy is borrowed directly from Tammany Hall. The proceedings of the Tammany Society, to which this Republican Executive Committee corresponds, have always been secret. Tammany Hall has long enforced pledges like those we are about to consider. Could the space be spared, it might easily be shown that the Republican primary system, is but a modified reproduction of the Tammany system, (minus the corporate franchise of the latter), and that the barter and bargains between the managers of each naturally spring from congeniality of spirit and of method.

If we now turn to the district associations, we shall come upon the gate-tenders of party membership—the rules by which the flavor and spirit of true Republicanism, in the partisan sense, are tested in New York. The constitutions and rules of the district associations are as particular and exacting as if designed to govern a club formed for apportioning privileges and dividends among its members, rather than as rules of proceeding on the part of citizens, gathered to declare their preferences, in matters of common right, interest and duty. As in an ordinary club, there is a committee on admissions. Every citizen, in order to become a member, *must be proposed and his name be posted on a bulletin board.* If the committee on admissions approve the name proposed, they are to report upon it at the next *monthly* meeting of the association. If they disapprove it, a vote may be taken at the meeting next following the report: so that, within two months, if regular monthly meetings are held (but there are never any in June and July), a New York Republican has a chance, if there are no postponements, of finding out whether he can get into the primary of his district. It will be well for him to petition at the gates of his primary early in the spring, because, there being no monthly meeting in two summer months at least, he cannot, by opening proceedings in the fall, have much chance of success before the nominations for the November elections. On the basis of the constitution, the committee on admissions ap-

pears not to be warranted in making a test of approval of any facts but these, "whether he is a Republican, a voter and a resident of the district;" but the fact that he can be elected only in case a *majority* of the members present *vote in his favor*, and that he must sign the constitution and make the pledges hereafter mentioned, give the matter a very different aspect.

The conditions of membership—the pledges to be taken on signing the constitution—are so important that I give the language of that instrument, lettering the clauses for convenient comment:

(A.) "If a majority of the members present at such meeting *vote in his favor*, he shall become a member, on signing the roll and a pledge that he is a Republican, a voter, and a resident of the district."

(B.) "And that he intends to support the Republican *party organization* of which the association is a recognized portion."

(C.) "And to *submit* to the legally expressed action of *the association* and of the *Central Committee*."

(D.) "And to honorably sustain *all nominations* made by the Republican party *through its legally constituted conventions, called or recognized* by the Central Committee."

(E.) "And that he is not, and will not become, a member of any committee *or body* which *does not recognize the authority* of the association."

(F.) And, to make it sure that this pledge is regard-

ed as no mere precaution in the matter of admissions, but is an *essential condition of continuing membership*, and of good Republicanism in the city of New York, provision is made in the constitution for a "committee of investigation," which has the duty of looking into any violation of this pledge. In the same sentence, as if they were equal offenses, it is provided that, for any wilful failure to keep "the *pledge* of membership" and "for any *fraud* at any election," the guilty member "may be expelled by the vote of a *majority* at *any meeting*;" and then follow the regulations of the trial. Once expelled, no person can be again admitted to membership except by a concurring vote of *two-thirds* of the committee on admissions and of *two-thirds* of the members of the association present "at a regular meeting"!

Such, so far as they are material here, are the conditions, subject to which a Republican in New York is compelled to approach and take his place in those meetings, where alone he can have the least share in the primary consultations and nominations of his party. Such are the regulations—such are the theories of justice and manliness in politics, according to which the peculiar machine of New York is operated, and the unique spoils system of the State is administered. If they are to be extended through the Union, by a national adoption of the New York system, it is worth while to dwell a little on these provisions.

(A.) The pledge here mentioned (which is only a

declaration of facts), is well enough, and might be made stronger by embracing a promise to uphold the principles of the party in good faith. But what right has an association-meeting, assembled in a local district, to require any other Republican of the district, ready to take a pledge to support the principles of the party, and against whose good character as a citizen and good faith as a Republican nothing has been charged, to gain the votes of a majority of all the old members of the primary present, before he is allowed to meet for party consultation, or have any share in making nominations in his district? He may even be forever excluded by a few members refusing, on the identical theory of the Independents, to vote at all. Such, I am well assured, is often the fact. Here is the first process in proscription and tyranny applied by the voters *in secrecy and without avowed cause or prescribed reasons*. The right of every good Republican to share equally with his fellow Republicans in making nominations, is a political right existing before all primaries, and will survive them all. In other States, so far as I am aware—even in Philadelphia, as I shall show—each year the lists of voters are made up for the primaries, and every citizen, known to be a Republican, is put upon them, and has a recognized *prima facie* right to remain there until rejected for cause. It is only in New York that the managing of primaries is made the business of a permanent, proscriptive club, in the nature of a stock com-



pany, and that the most honored Republican who all his life has upheld his party, must become an humble petitioner, and be bulletined for months at primary headquarters, while he wins the votes of a majority of the old share-holders before he is prepared to further compromise his manhood by taking a series of servile pledges! When, after the method of close corporations, these primaries are used to thus exclude all those outside, oppression has begun, and the seeds of distrust and disaffection have been sown. The primaries are seen to be devices—monopolies—for controlling nominations. If there be any need of a vote, where the facts of being a true Republican, and if you please a respectable citizen, are admitted, nothing less than a vote of rejection by nearly the whole meeting should be allowed. Short of that, there should certainly be no right to reject except by a large majority, and by an open vote, and for some avowed and good cause. On no principle that does not justify and enforce a tyranny, can a vote reject a candidate or expel a member who is faithful to Republican principles, or who is not shown to intend to abuse or to have abused his membership.

But should the applicant have secured the votes of a majority at the primary where his name stands posted, his ordeal will have only begun, if he cares for preserving the measure of manhood and independence which so many Republicans hold dear. He is at once tendered

the pledges in the constitution placed before him for signature. Let us consider these pledges in the order they are lettered.

(B.) There could, I repeat, be no good objection to the most exacting pledge to support Republican principles or else resign. Such a pledge would be salutary. But it is not principles or policy to which first, last, or anywhere, the novitiate is called upon to pledge himself! It is not the party—or even a faithful Republican administration, but only the “party *organization*,” or in other words, the New York “*machine*,” which is placed highest and foremost—to which, as the supreme standard, and the paramount duty, vows of fidelity and pledges of faith are first exacted from the fortunate Republican—if fortunate he be—who has just passed the gate of a primary! Neither principles nor duties are anywhere mentioned or recognized in those constitutions.

The natural interpretation, as well as the accepted spirit of this pledge, condemn every attempt from the ranks to improve these organizations, and plainly suggest that if any changes are to be made, they must be awaited as suggestions from the secret source of all authority above, and not be attempted by those whose supreme duty it is to obey. Thus a servile spirit is developed and the power of the machine is magnified, while all healthy criticism, all the larger duties of good citizenship, and all the great interests of the Republi-

can party are disparaged and ignored. Under this organization, we have seen that the central committee of the city has a paramount authority, which may be *wholly* conferred upon an executive committee, all the proceedings of which *shall* be kept *strictly* secret. But Mr. Cornell has told us, in his letter of 1871, that the State committee has power to reorganize the whole primary system of the city, and that it has already three times done so; once before 1866, once in 1866, and again in 1871. The obedience pledged, therefore, is not merely to the subordinate organization of the city, but to the great central power—to those who directly manage the State “machine.” George III., in the pride of his tyranny, and to restrain the republican tendency of his subjects, once issued a proclamation forbidding them to combine for “*reforming* the laws;” but here is a series of Republican associations exacting constitutional pledges from their members to not even singly attempt to reform their own methods!

(C.) We come now to the third pledge, which is one of obedience to the “legally expressed action of the association and of the *central committee*.” Here we see very clearly, that the pledge to support the organization is intended as a pledge of obedience to its officers, and especially to the higher officers. What such committee may not legally do, is not easy to say, under authority so unqualified, and which has been interpreted to extend to reorganizations which have re-

modeled the local constitutions themselves! If nothing more is intended by this pledge than to secure support of the action of the association, in the ordinary sense of those words, then the parliamentary rule applicable to such bodies—that the majority may decide, and that the minority must conform to this decision, would be ample and the pledge needless; but, if it is intended, like some of the rules of discipline among the Jesuits, to preclude all discussion and to teach a lesson of servile obedience, it is certainly well adapted to its purpose.

(D.) The fourth pledge is still more important; for it is one of *honor*, to support “*all nominations*”—and hence whether good or bad—and whether corruptly or fairly made “*by the party—through conventions recognized by the Central Committee.*” Nominations are not to be supported because made by *the party* itself, as they would be in case the body of its members should, under a great impulse, come together in person, as they might in towns, villages or districts—but only when made through conventions *recognized by the secret central power of the organisation.*

The Republicans, outside the primaries, are not admitted to have any rights which those within are bound to respect. In other words, every member of the primaries is carefully left at liberty to refuse to vote for any candidate—though nominated by every other Republican of a district, city or State,—provided he is not

nominated by the regular organization—that is by the machine! The monopoly of nominations is to be upheld even against the people themselves. Such Republicans only as obey the machine and such methods only as its managers provide for, are, under this pledge, to be recognized and supported. What can do more to encourage audacious and unworthy men to push and purchase their way to nominations, through these secret, all-powerful committees—what can more forcibly suggest the profits of leadership in New York politics—than the fact that the whole body of banded partisans, on whose work and votes regular candidates rely for an election, are not only trained in Burr's system of military obedience, but are pledged upon their honor to support every candidate thus nominated—scoundrel and briber though he may be known to be!

If a pledge to support all nominations is not positively demoralizing in itself to every one who takes it, it must often impose silence, when public duty and party interests alike demand that unworthy candidates and corrupt methods in nominations should be exposed and condemned. Not infrequently, it must require a vote for a candidate known to be unworthy to hold office if not utterly corrupt. No true patriot can give such a pledge. No party that sanctions such rules of duty can appear to much advantage in the eyes of the better citizens, even when there is no other party but that led by Tammany Hall or John Kelly. It is

such alternatives which threaten the increase of the non-voting or Independent dissenters. There is nothing more needed in our politics—nothing that would be more wholesome in its influence upon the Republican party—than that men of unselfish aims and a manly spirit should be induced, by every facility, to set forth their views and make their influence felt against corrupt intrigues and unworthy candidates for office; but instead, in that great city where the need is greatest, a pledge of servile support is exacted which far more conforms to the maxims of despotism than to the theory of a Republic. The greatest knave that ever secured a nomination by fraud from one of the primaries, may under this pledge of honor, literally borrowed from the system of Burr and the code of the old regency, demand the support of every Republican who consents to remain a member. Such a pledge is not merely a compromise of the reasonable independence of those who take it. It tends to degrade official life, to bring all political action into contempt, and to fill the offices with servile partisans and selfish intriguers.

(E.) There is still another pledge, the meaning of which is somewhat enigmatical. Taken literally it would prevent membership of a charitable society or even of a Christian church, in case the charity and the church did not “recognize the authority of the association.” It should, I must assume, be deemed applicable only to political organizations and subjects. Thus interpreted,

it serves to further illustrate the narrow, selfish and proscriptive spirit of the New York primary system. For, under this pledge, no Republican can vote in the party organization of his district, except upon a surrender of his natural right and duty to take part in all useful efforts for the purification of political life. No man, being a member of one of these primaries, could become a member of an organization for reforming the charter of the city, for improving the civil service of the State, for bringing a corrupt officer to justice, for propagating sounder theories as to organizing primaries or conducting elections—unless he either resigned his membership in the primary or brought the society he had joined to a recognition of primary authority. The Jesuits' vows of obedience hardly go further, but the partisans of the primaries have omitted the vows of chastity and poverty, and they are not, like the Jesuits, ready to serve in foreign parts unless in a public office, with a good salary.

It hardly need be said that few men of self-respect will subject themselves to the fate they may meet in a New York primary, under such a system, even if all pledges were abandoned, and only the need of a majority vote repelled them from the meetings of their party. It would be bad enough, if those who control the primaries were generally men of character and liberal views; but as the membership is now made up largely of political speculators and dependants, it is natural, as

it is a notorious fact, that the humiliating ordeal is fatal to the highest interests of the party, by excluding the Republicans whose presence would give a better character to the primaries. How many votes, for example, —I will not say, could an Independent Republican get, —but how many could any Republican get, for admission, if he were known to be opposed to the machine candidate for president, governor, sheriff, or even port warden? How many could he get if he were known to think that the constitutions of the primaries needed amending and liberalizing? Not one in twenty, I venture to answer. If these primaries made no pretense of a representation of public interests or of the common body of Republicans in the city, but frankly admitted themselves to be private clubs looking to their own enjoyment, or bands of partisan spoilsmen, associated for the purpose of gaining power, office and contracts, by using such portions of public authority as they might be able to control, then indeed their methods would be consistent and their avowals well founded. No one willing to take part in such an enterprise would have a right to complain, should he be rejected as a shareholder. The principle of admission is, in fact, exactly that of a mere private club, or rather of a Prussian regiment, the most bureaucratic and proscriptive, perhaps, of all organizations for a public purpose. Nothing beyond such considerations can be needed to show the “irrepressible conflict” of principle and influ-



ence between such partisan methods and systems, and those broader and more independent forces which shape the higher movements of society, and are essential to the supremacy of a party whose strength is in the better sentiment of the nation.

The constitution of the Independents controverts the primary theory of pledges before election, and of subservience and blind support of all candidates. Every voter (it says) accepting the platform and principles of his party is a member of that party. "No voter should be held by the action or nomination of any caucus or convention of the party against his private judgment." "It is his duty to vote against bad measures and unfit men for office." It is not, I think, conceivable that any of the great men who formed the Republican party, or who now can be regarded as among its statesmen, would have come under the pledges exacted at the primaries. Mr. Seward, the greatest of those whom New York has produced, has left an interesting record in the first speech he made after he came to the Republicans from the Whigs, which is in striking contrast with these pledges. "*So long* (he said) as the Republican party shall be firm, and faithful to the constitution, the Union and the rights of man, I shall serve it *with the reservation of that personal independence which is my birthright*; but at the same time, with the zeal and devotion that patriotism allows and enjoins."

Protests against the constitutions of the primaries, as violating the reserved rights to which Mr. Seward refers, were not first brought by the Independents, but have been many times urged in vain. In 1876, they were formally presented in writing to the State committee, of which Mr. Cornell was chairman, by a committee of the New York Republican Reform Club; and for want of a better answer they were thrown out, under the pretense that the State committee had no authority to interfere with the local politics of the city—a pretense which Mr. Cornell's letter of 1871 (already cited, but of which the petitioning committee seems not to have been aware), shows to have been utterly unwarranted. The remodeling of the old constitutions by the imposition of the *very pledges complained of, was a change sanctioned if not imposed by the State committee itself under Mr. Cornell's advice in 1871. It is especially interesting as marking the progress of Burr's military discipline* for the government of parties.

It is worthy of notice that nowhere in these forty-two pages of regulations for primaries is there an indication that parties or party managers owe any responsibility to the people. Nowhere is there a suggestion that to make reforms in what is corrupt or vicious may be a means of party strength or a duty of official life. Nowhere is it even faintly hinted that fidelity to principles is a party obligation, nor are such words as principles, duty, or responsibility anywhere to be found! But

in their stead, and most prominent, are partisan interest, obedience to superiors, limitations upon the just freedom of political action, servile submission to the majority, and pledges, pledges, pledges, to everything but to principles and to the public welfare.

I shall not attempt to point out, in any general way, the evils to which the system and theories prevailing in these primaries leads, for my purpose is only to disclose enough of them to make clear the grounds of the hostility and disgust they have developed, and the great changes which an introduction of the New York system would cause in the national politics. But even this limited purpose compels me to refer to certain obligations imposed by that system, though not expressed in its constitutions. The pledge to support the nominee is only a counterpart of the implied pledge of the candidate when elected, to stand by the primaries, and to treat their members as the whole party for all purposes of office, patronage, profits, and jobs. Unless outside public opinion is very formidable, all the offices, places, contracts, and opportunities for gain are the spoils of those who are on the servile rolls of these primaries. Those who vote at the primaries are to be regarded as speaking the authoritative voice of the party, whose instructions, no matter how perfunctorily granted, Republican conventions are alone to regard. To keep up these primaries, every officer and placeman they nominate, or whose conduct they can influ-

ence, is held bound to contribute a share of his salary, and, in return therefor, the primaries are to stand by the officer in his delinquency, just as their members are to vote for him, worthy or unworthy. The whole matter is a piece of paying business—a co-operation for power, influence, and profit. What should be the supreme ends—that of securing for the people a free choice of candidates—of enabling them to approve or condemn effectively by their votes—and of holding officials to just regard for the public interests—are, to say the least, very much lost sight of.

I do not mean to say that this corrupt rule of mutual support, and mutual disregard of public interests, is by any means universal. But that such is the spirit and tendency of the system of primary organizations, and that such is the practice—with a frequency that has largely brought the partisan politics of New York into contempt, and has greatly impaired the strength of the Republican party of the State—are humiliating facts which no candid, well-informed man will controvert. Selfish, if not corrupt, bartering and bargaining between the Republican partisan leaders and the Democrats are almost constant under this system of primaries. Such was the fact in the last election—such were the facts disclosed and approved by him, even on the face of Mr. Cornell's already cited letter of 1871, in which he shows that the primary officers and the party leaders were hirelings of Tammany Hall. He states the terms of a

new bargain he had just made! He further declares that "we found the same condition of affairs in the "State convention of 1866, which we found in regard "to the then existing Republican organization of New "York." It is only such facts that have prevented the Republicans growing stronger on the higher plains of life—kept them, indeed, from becoming supreme in an enlightened state, where the opposing party has been so corrupt that the knavery of its officials and their spoliations of the treasury had become notorious throughout the world. It is such facts that have separated the professional politicians of the Republican party so widely from the true business life and culture of the people, and have provoked the organization of great bodies for the purification of the party to whose principles they are deeply attached, but toward whose partisan leaders they have feelings akin to contempt. It is facts, pledges and servility such as these which have led to the development of a mercenary, cowardly and subservient spirit in the more partisan circles, so that a few leaders may easily dictate whom the primaries shall send as delegates, and how these delegates shall vote in conventions; while, all the time, the people remain in the largest part unrepresented, and those who might be their worthy representatives are unheard.

II. But waiving all other considerations, let us see what weight is due to the members of these primaries

on the simple basis of their numbers. There is no means of getting at the number of these members now with any great accuracy. It does not probably exceed 6,000 or 7,000. The best authority accessible is the statement of a gentleman who held one of the highest federal offices in the Southern District of New York, under President Grant, and whose long familiarity with the management of New York primaries entitles his opinion to respect. In a published letter written to General Arthur, the late Collector, in November last, urging a purification of the primaries (and from which I shall now quote), he estimates the number of members entitled to vote at the primaries at not over 6,000. His estimate is generally accepted, and has not, I believe, been contradicted. Some of his reasons for a reorganization are almost as damaging as those given by Mr. Cornell in 1871. He says: "The rolls are de-  
"ceptive;" "in one district half the names of those on  
"the rolls are not known in the district. These bogus  
"names afford a convenient means for fraudulent  
"voting." The rolls of many of the districts "are full  
"of the names of men not Republicans, and are *used by*  
"*the managers to perpetuate their control of the associa-*  
"*tions.* On the other hand, desirable members, good  
"Republicans, who have an absolute right to become  
"members, *are excluded.* Sometimes this is done by  
"a direct rejection, but *oftener* by a refusal to vote  
"upon the names presented." Here we see the use

that may be made of the required vote in favor of an applicant, which has engaged our attention under the constitution.

“At elections (he says), they are or are not members, according as they are or are not prepared to vote a ticket satisfactory to the controlling powers. So notorious is it that elections in the associations are not fairly conducted, that contests are of rare occurrence.” He says a reform of the primary system must be made “or the Republican party of the State must and will sweep it out of existence.”

There is no evidence that the writer has considered how inevitable it was that the vicious terms of admission to these primaries would very soon reproduce a membership and abuses of the nature he sets forth ; for he makes no complaint of the pledges and proscription at the party gates. On the contrary, he recognizes a sort of supreme authority and healing virtue in the head of the central committee. He says to General Arthur, as a Russian officer might say to his superior, or a priest to the general of his order, that “*a word from you will accomplish it. I mean an earnest word which will make the henchmen understand that you really mean it. I have tried in vain to bring about that reform which I believe to be essential to the usefulness or long continuance of the organization.*”

A worthy effort indeed, and deserving of all praise ! But reform was not a popular word with the leaders.

It was these very menial and fraudulent primaries which, at that moment, stood behind the engineers of the machine, while they, defying the pledges of the party, resisted all reforms in Washington and New York alike. It was these same primaries, which, through bargains with the Democratic factionists and Tammany Hall, were, in the fall elections, to lift one of these engineers into the governor's chair. It was these primaries which at the Utica Convention of this year, as we shall see, were to make the majority that has undertaken to pledge the State of New York on the presidential question. At such a time, were the obedient voters at the primaries, for any such reasons, to be called to account, and Independents or Reformers, who might do dangerous things not on the programme, to be allowed to become members? An inauspicious time indeed to appeal to the leaders to reform the New York primaries!

But let us return to the more important question of the number of members. We will assume them to be 6,000. It is very safe to say that the best opinion of the city will not estimate the character and capacity of that membership above the average of the Republican voters of the city. It is a conspicuous fact that the names of but a very few indeed of prominent Republicans are to be found on the rolls of the primaries. And how, with such conditions of membership, is it possible that it should be otherwise? It is my deliberate



opinion that if 500 of the foremost men to be found adhering to the Republican party in the City of New York—selected on any just estimate of personal worth—were to be named, hardly 50 of them would be found to be members of the primary associations. The number who would vote, if every member should attend, at these primary nominations, would be less than *one-eighth* of the Republican voters of the city (Wadsworth having received 51,351 votes), and they would, therefore, by less than *a fifth*, exceed the number of Republicans who refused to vote for Cornell; he having, as we have seen, fallen behind 5,029 votes in the city. We need not stop to inquire how many members of the primaries attend to elect delegates.

No more need be said as to the relative character, capacity and influence of these antagonistic classes of voters. No one not acquainted with New York can appreciate the intrinsic absurdity of claiming that the vote of these primaries is a fair representation of New York Republicans. The audacity of the claim is sublime or is ridiculous, as you happen to view it.

It is on a nomination made by a majority secured in such primaries—by a majority of delegates representing such a constituency, and in face of such a dissent—that the coming National Convention must decide how much importance is to be attached to the pretended instructions given by the Republican voters of the State of New York to her delegates to Chicago.

I cannot, as a Republican, bring such humiliating facts before the public without regret; nor would I give them greater publicity, except that I feel, as a great body of good Republicans feel, that the time has come when this vicious New York system must not be approved and strengthened by a National Convention. If it be said that it is for New York alone to reform her primary system, and that a National Convention has nothing to do with it, I admit that, in a sense, such is the fact. It is absolutely so where only State officers and administration are concerned. No one expects the nation to interfere with the New York primaries. But the claim will be made that these primary delegates truly represented the Republican sentiment of the State, and that they have a right to bind its voters. If the Convention chooses to say that the delegates are to be treated as the official returns of a State are treated, and that it cares not to look to the opinions of the people, even though defeat be the consequence, that, of course, settles the matter for the present.

III. It would be easy to show by overwhelming proof, that the primary system of New York City has, with the most disastrous effects, been making rapid advances of late in the cities, and even in some of the villages of the interior. To describe the disgraceful proceedings which in some cases attended the selection of delegates to Utica, would require too much

space. I confine myself to a single illustration in only one city; and I will present it in the language of the oldest and most influential Republican paper of the State, outside New York City.

“The frauds and indecencies complained of for years  
“in this city at the primaries were repeated as brazenly  
“and as insolently in a majority of the wards of this  
“city on Saturday last as ever before. Witnesses were  
“excluded, ballot-boxes were stuffed, non-residents  
“and Democrats were allowed to vote, ‘repeating’  
“was frequent, challenges were laughed at, the most  
“respected citizens were insulted, and the machine  
“inspectors took care that the count made up for  
“whatever was otherwise lacking.

“The Republicans of Albany fully recognize the re-  
“sponsibility they have assumed in breaking away  
“from the organization which claims the prerogative of  
“‘regularity.’ They have borne its insolent dictation  
“and fraudulent modes far beyond the limits of honor-  
“able forbearance. But they have waited and hoped  
“in vain. Whatever change there has been has been  
“for the worse. Every new primary election has  
“developed some new process by which the Republican  
“electors of the city have been defrauded.

“No matter what the majority may be against the  
“‘machine’ in any ward where there are inspectors to  
“do the bidding of their masters, the majority is out-  
“counted.

“It was hoped that the *independent* revolt of last fall, “and the election of a sheriff in spite of the ‘machine,’ “would have taught its manipulators a useful lesson. “It should have done so, for the result of that action “was majestic in its significance. But its lesson was “disregarded, and the frauds which compelled and “justified that successful revolt have been aggravatingly “repeated—first at the primaries preliminary to the “State Convention, and again last Saturday to elect “delegates to the City Convention. What had gone “before was bad enough, but nothing has ever equaled “this last demonstration in the boldness, extent and “brazenness of the frauds practiced by the ‘machine.’ “The character of these frauds will be learned by “Republicans elsewhere from the affidavits subjoined. “We ask attention to them, and cite them not only as a “perfect vindication of what the Independent Repub- “licans have done, but in justification of their purpose “to no longer submit to the insolent dictation and “fraudulent modes of the men who are determined to “rule or ruin.” \*

IV. *Philadelphia Primaries*.—They come nearest to those of New York; yet we shall find their contrasts with our methods far more striking than their similarities.

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\* *Albany Evening Journal*, March 30 and April 1, 1880.

In Philadelphia there are: 1. Division Associations, 2. Ward Committees, and 3. The City Committee. The Ward Committee is annually elected by the Association, and the City Committee by the Ward Committee. The City Committee is the head of the party in the city; both these committees are to keep records "in well bound books." And at this point is the first marked contrast with the New York system. For while here "absolute secrecy" is enjoined, there publicity is provided for. In Philadelphia, instead of nominations being agreed upon and candidates selected at the private meetings of a committee, whose motives and proceedings are shrouded with an absolute and eternal secrecy, the rules provide that "the City Committee shall meet at a time within ten days of conventions, etc., of all kinds, and shall *then register all persons who may desire to become candidates* before either of said Conventions. And the Ward Committee shall meet within five days, and, in like manner, "make *registry of all candidates* for ward and representative offices."

*No other candidates* than those so registered can be nominated or balloted for in conventions; a provision well adapted to prevent the surprises and bargains with which we are familiar. Here, it will be seen, the equal rights of every Republican to stand for office in his party and to be recognized by the party authorities as a candidate, and be put forward as such in party

conventions are openly recognized and enforced rights. I hardly need say, such rights are unknown in New York.

And now for voting at the Philadelphia primaries. "*Each year*," in the language of the rules, "Division associations *shall be formed* in every division of each ward, which shall meet and organize." It is not therefore, permanent partisan clubs, but the *annually* enrolled Republican voters, that have control.

In September of each year, each of these associations is, under the rules, to elect three members, who in conjunction with the president and secretary, shall serve as a board of *registering* officials. "The board of registering officers *shall enter* in a book provided for that purpose, alphabetically, the names and residences of *all Union Republican voters known to them residing in their respective divisions.*" The persons so registered *are the voters* at the primaries. In significant contrast with the New York system, it is not the pledged members of a permanent club who are treated as forming the Republican party, but every known republican in the district! And, every year, a new enrollment is to be made, because each Republican voter is recognized as having an equal right to be heard every year in the primary councils of his party. These are principles of common right and justice, upon which a party can stand before an enlightened community. But, there is one partisan restric-

tion of these rights, which, to the limited extent of its application, is a serious drawback upon the fairness of the Philadelphia system. It appears in this language of the rules: If it shall be proved to the satisfaction of the registering officers, that any enrolled Republican "did not vote the regular Union Republican ticket at "the last *general* election, they shall erase his name "from the list." And, every Republican, not finding his name on the register, or in case his vote is challenged, may be required to "solemnly promise to vote "the whole of the ticket of the party at the next succeeding election," as a condition of being put on the register. These provisions, like Jackson's spoils system, are an importation from New York. The spirit they encourage has naturally facilitated partisan intrigue and Cameron rule in Pennsylvania in later years. Still they are far short of their New York originals. In their nature they can be made applicable to but few voters. The vast body of Republican voters—instead of 6,000 of them all pledged, drilled, muzzled and made subservient, and anxious to retain the offices and spoils among themselves—should always be on the rolls of the nominating associations in Philadelphia. No majority or other vote of the members of an association is required to put them there. No secret action of committees, no promise not to belong to any other political body, no pledge to obey orders, no exactions of feudal fidelity to the party machine, are made condi-

tions of membership or rules of political life. The worst that can happen is that if the name of a Republican is erased from the rolls this year for not having voted the regular ticket last year, he can have it restored when he finds candidates whom he can conscientiously promise to support. Such a condition, objectionable as it is, can exclude but few.

V. Considered in its general influence, a little reflection will make it clear that the theory and subservience which prevail in the New York primaries are equally unfriendly to all large, liberal and disinterested conceptions of politics, and to all high and patriotic ideals of official duty. They tend to dwarf the moral sense of the citizen, to cause public officers to regard themselves as the mere agents of their party, and to convert politics into a mercenary trade.

The system upon which they are organized, like that of the Catholic church, or the order of Jesuits, has become of itself a powerful agency for propagating the servile theories they embody, and for obstructing the higher sentiment and the reform policy of the people, to which they are hostile. All their highest officers—like the Pope and the General of the order of Jesuits—are controlled by the system itself to which they must conform. They dare not attempt to arrest it, even if they are not bent and dwarfed to its narrow and proscriptive spirit. It no longer takes an able Senator or an able



Governor to make the machine a great and dangerous power. It is so of itself, whoever may be the chief engineer, for the simple reason that the doctrine of absolute and servile obedience to the will of the majority—led by one man selected by a small body of pledged partisans acting as a secret conclave—enables the whole force of the partisans of the State to be concentrated at any moment upon a single point, like a well disciplined army, obeying one command and seeking common spoils as the reward of common victory.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SOME OTHER TESTS OF REPUBLICAN OPINION IN NEW YORK, AND ESPECIALLY THE PUBLIC JOURNALS AND THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB.

WE have thus far seen public opinion only as expressed in its contrasts by the primaries and the Independents. They directly represent little more than one fourth of the Republican voters of New York. What are the views of the other three fourths, and where do they find expression? The primaries represent those who are sure to support the regular candidates, good or bad. The Independents are those whose vote is most uncertain—most contingent upon the candidates and the platform. Between these extreme bodies stand the great mass—the other three fourths—of the Republican voters. Most of them are little likely to be moved; yet many of them are liable to go with their brothers nearest in either direction.

How may we best judge of the views of those who make up this great body? In no way so correctly as by the newspapers and periodicals which they pay for

and read. There is no part of the Union in which the public press is more influential than in New York. Nowhere does it more faithfully represent the sentiments of the people. In New York City are to be found the ablest and the most extensively circulated journals of the country. They reach every part of the State and all the States of the Union. Their value both as disclosing and as moulding public opinion is greatly underrated by partisan managers whose schemes they so generally condemn. Every reader selects his newspapers and his periodicals (unless when seeking the views of his adversaries), because they represent, in a general way at least, the principles which he approves. There is no surer indication that political parties and their leaders fear the criticism they need, and are guilty of the abuses with which they are charged, than the facts that they affect to scorn the public press, and find themselves unable to secure its support. That much of what is written in the political journals is partisan, selfish or otherwise discreditable, cannot be denied. The tendency of some of them to take up a candidate, as if they alone had nominated him—as if no other had any merits or any chances—as if they were the only quarter from which strength could come—is much to be lamented. It is a perversion of the duty of journalism and a serious impairment of its prestige and power. But for all this, it remains true that the public press is a great conservative energy—a power which has in-

creased more within a generation, and has a greater promise in the future, than any other. It is a power, the support of which is, above all others, essential to the vitality of a party that appeals to public intelligence and virtue. Every year the public journals are becoming less and less the dependent spokesmen of parties, and more and more the representatives and the support of sound principles and of independence in politics. In no part of the Union do these observations better conform to the fact than in New York. There, especially, have the journals, by becoming more self-reliant and outspoken for principles and duty, both responded to the growth of independent convictions and contributed to their development. If we shall find that the Republican management in New York is losing the support of the journals and periodicals which its members most prefer to read, we may be sure that it is not because the press has decayed, but because the party leaders are unworthy of the party, or the party is unfaithful to its history and its principles.

In assuming that journalists most correctly comprehend and represent public opinion, we need attribute to them no natural superiority of insight or virtue. It is, rather, because their talents are trained in that direction, and they have the best means of knowledge. Their success and even the safety and honor of their business depend on their judgments concerning public opinion.

It is not needless to emphasize these obvious truths at a time when the desperate partisan managers in New York are asking the country to accept a version of the public opinion of the State contradicted by the overwhelming voice of the public press. The party needs to seriously consider what are its prospects, when it has only to open its eyes to see that its methods and management, in New York, are becoming more and more repugnant to that vast volume of public opinion to which the higher journalism of the country gives utterance. It only needs to take in the situation, plainly set forth in the Republican journals, in order to comprehend that leadership is being exercised, to such an extent as never before, by those who represent little more than the servile primaries, the high officials, the office-seekers and the professed politicians. Let us glance at the leading political journals and periodicals read by the Republican voters of New York City :

1. *The Evening Post*, the oldest of them—a paper whose readers generally belong to the most intelligent classes, and among whom are many Independents—vigorously assails machine politics and the party manipulators. It condemns Mr. Conkling, Mr. Cornell, the Utica Convention and their doings, and vigorously advocates civil service reform.

2. *The Commercial Advertiser*.—This evening journal

has a decidedly partisan tone, reprobates Independents in politics, and believes in no reform not recommended by the partisan leaders. It supports General Grant, but distrusts the present management of the party in New York, and has no faith in Mr. Conkling or Mr. Cornell or their policy. What it thinks of the situation, these lines, from its editorial columns of the 6th of March last, sufficiently show: "This sort of argument  
"or want of argument, is appropriate to such a cause  
"as Mr. Cornell's. It is stupid and blind as the gov-  
"ernor has been mulish, dull and senseless. \*  
"Because he is governor by the grace of Senator  
"Conkling, must everybody stand aside and obsequi-  
"ously abase themselves? &c. \* \* He will  
"probably learn before the end of his term, that he is  
"not the State or the Republican party, but simply  
"the figure-head of a stupid, blundering clique of mule-  
"like politicians who have not brains enough to run a  
"milk-wagon." It further says of the Saratoga Con-  
vention which nominated Mr. Cornell (and which, like  
that at Utica, was substantially controlled by the repre-  
sentatives of the New York primaries), "that its entire  
"action was brainless and stupid, and that *but for the*  
"*Kelly fight*, the Republican party would have gone  
"down under the pressure of seventy-five thousand  
"majority." This, I may add, is but one among hun-  
dreds of comments, hardly more complimentary, to be  
found in the more partisan journals of the State.

3. *The Graphic*.—This evening journal denounces the Machine and the intrigues of its managers, and insists upon civil service reform and more independence in politics.

4. *The Journal of Commerce*.—This is strictly a commercial paper, but it is read by many who will vote the Republican ticket if its candidates are worthy men. It is utterly hostile to machine politics and the New York spoils system.

5. *The Herald*, the oldest of the great morning dailies, and having by far the largest daily circulation, is well known not to be a party journal. But among its more than a hundred thousand readers, a great proportion, if tempted by fit candidates, will vote with the Republicans. It is a significant sign of the times that more and more, in later years, with the elevation of its moral tone, the *Herald* has given support to the great principles of the Republican party. It is opposed to New York machine management, has condemned Mr. Cornell's system, has declared that civil service reform "must ultimately succeed if we are to "save our free institutions," and says that "Mr. Blaine "would have had a majority at Utica had the Convention been a fair expression of the real preference of "the New York Republicans."

6. *The Tribune*, the next in seniority of the great

morning dailies, is everywhere known to be a powerful party journal, and it was never more enterprising than now. It disapproved of the nomination of Mr. Cornell, condemns mere machine management, holds with the *Herald* that the Utica Convention was a misrepresentation of the sentiment of the State, insists that its attempted instructions are not binding on any one save the delegates at large, repudiates the choice of the convention, and vigorously advocates the cause of Mr. Blaine. As a party journal it does not favor Independents, but it recognizes their strength and significance. "There is a body of Independent Republicans" . . . (it says) "embracing many accomplished and estimable citizens, with a *large following from the best young men in the city, who count for much in our politics*, and whose opinions we must always receive with respect, even though we cannot always share them. They understand something of the relations of means to ends; they are capable of doing something in politics, because they know how; and they do not undertake to conduct a campaign by the blowing of rams' horns."\*

7. *The Times*, the youngest of the three great morning journals, the whole country knows to be distinguished for the independence of its tone, for its fidelity to Republican principles, for the courage and vigor

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\* *Tribune Editorial*, Feb. 4, 1880.



with which they are set forth. It has been resolute for honesty and openness in party management and in official action. It is outspoken in its condemnation of the Conkling-Cornell machine and of the New York spoils system. It has denounced the abuses of the primaries. It is an efficient advocate of civil service reform, and of that manly freedom in politics which it always maintains for itself.

No journal has, more frequently or more forcibly than the *Times*, pointed out the bad management of the Republican leaders in New York. Its support of General Grant is conditioned on its belief that he will not again come under the influence of Mr. Conkling, and that his enlarged experience is a sufficient guaranty that he will resume that reform policy from which he was forced by Congress and by the malign influence of the great politicians who beset his former administration.

8. *Harper's Weekly*.—This powerful Republican journal, which has 500,000 readers, and which is edited by George William Curtis, is everywhere so well known as the enemy of all that is corrupt and partisan in political affairs, and as the enlightened supporter of reform in administration, of independence, freedom, and honesty in politics, that no explanation of its position is needed.

9. *The Nation*.—This able weekly has a cultivated

class of readers, generally but feebly bound to either party, who are very likely to bestow their votes according to their estimate of the worth of the candidates and their disposition to favor civil service reform, a sound currency, and freedom in politics, all of which the *Nation* effectively advocates.

10. *The Staats Zeitung*.—This is the leading journal of the Germans, of whom there are about two hundred and fifty thousand in the city. It has no very strong party bias, though conditionally Democratic. It denounces the machine and its managers. The votes of its readers will, I think, in great part go for candidates favorable to the views set forth in the Republican platform of 1876.

11. I have no space for referring to the religious papers, or to the literary periodicals, of which so great a number are issued in the city. But it is safe to say that, in a more marked degree than the political press, they sympathize with the position of the Independents, and reprobate the machine, the spoils system, and all those who are identified with them.

*The significant facts are, then, that there is not a single Republican journal published in the city (unless quite obscure), nor one which any considerable number of Republicans read, nor any periodical of Republican sympathies, which sustains the existing leadership of the Re-*

*publican party of the State, or which does not condemn the machine or system under which the party is managed, and for which a national indorsement is being now sought. Nor is there a single journal which approves the policy which dictated the Utica Convention.*

If, on going into the interior, the opposition and disaffection should be perhaps less decisive, it would yet be found very extensive and full of admonition.

For example, the oldest, and I believe most influential, of all the Republican journals of the interior of the State—*The Albany Evening Journal*, published at the Capital, and from the foundation of the Republican party its chief organ (until it condemned the late party policy)—is more outspoken in dissent than any journal of the city. Mr. Thurlow Weed declared a few days since, in an article written on the 50th anniversary of his editorship, that the “calling of the Utica Convention was a mistake, a double mistake.” So, going to the western part of the State, we find the leading journal there, *The Utica Herald*, published at the home of Mr. Conkling, vigorous in its arraignment of what is most opposed by the *Albany Journal* and the leading journals of the city.

12. In one other quarter—*The Union League Club*—we may find an expression of Republican opinion important enough to deserve notice. This patriotic club was organized in the city in the early stages of the rebellion, and it has always been faithful to Republican

principles. It has about a thousand city members, among whom there are hardly a score who do not belong to the Republican party. There are about four hundred non-resident members.

Among its members are included a great proportion of the men of high character, independent views, and commanding influence, who belong to the Republican party of the city—more such men, I am compelled to believe, than have attended any New York Republican State convention in late years—many times more such men than would be found in the combined membership of all the primaries of the city. In this club, the two principal questions about which the partisans and the Independents are at issue have been considered—that of dictation by the machine and the primaries, and that of civil service reform\*—and upon both, as I shall have occasion to explain more at length, the club steadily sustained the views which the Independents have since adopted.

Such was the state of Republican opinion in New York, when the Utica Convention met for nominating delegates to Chicago.

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See Appendix.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE UTICA CONVENTION FOR THE ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO CHICAGO, AND ITS INSTRUCTIONS.

IT is not easy to imagine what could have prevented the Republican managers from seeing, when the convention was called to meet on the 25th of February, that every reasonable respect for discordant views was essential for uniting the Republican vote.

With such views, it might have been thought wise not to call the convention hastily, or at a period unusually and needlessly early, but to give the people an opportunity for a deliberate decision in the light of the action of other States.

But a very different theory prevailed. It was assumed by the managers, (1) that the name of General Grant was overwhelmingly popular with the people, and (2) that, through machine management, that popularity could be at once made so effective in its interest, that all opposition would be silenced, and that New York could easily dictate its terms at Chicago. Such a result would both extricate the managers from a dangerous position and give them the prestige of victory. These two assumptions, I suppose, are the "double

"mistake" which we have seen that Thurlow Weed pointed out as committed in calling the Utica Convention.

I. It was a part of the general plan that Pennsylvania, where General Grant was supposed to be strongest, should take the lead. Holding its convention a short time before that at Utica, Pennsylvania was to send such evidence of his popularity as would insure a marked triumph in New York. Here was the first disappointment; for the Cameron-machine majority in Pennsylvania depended on about a score of votes in a body of 250 delegates. The small majority of a dozen was secured by an amount of intrigue and coercion which deprived the result of even the small moral weight which, on its face, it seemed to have. It tended to disaffect the people toward General Grant, whom, on his own merits, they hold in high estimation. It was that result which caused the *Tribune* and the *Herald* to characterize the result in Pennsylvania as an exposure of the weakness of General Grant as a candidate, and the *Times* to declare that "the people do not want him "as a candidate of the Camerons and Conklings, secured by manipulated conventions and pledged delegates."

II. In these times, when every claim in behalf of the minority, if not of free speech, is met with the assertion

that it is the right of the majority to rule, it is worth while to pause a moment, before we go to the Utica Convention, over the true theory and functions of such a body.

There is a large class of politicians, especially in New York, who hold that no Republicans should be consulted except the pledged members of the primaries. That great mass of Republicans, for example, in the city of New York (more than 40,000 out of 50,000, and in something approaching that ratio in all the cities), who would resent the conditions of admission to the primaries, but whose voice and influence are so potent in the public press, in banking, in commerce, in all the great movements of reform and philanthropy which distinguish an enlightened people, are not to be represented or regarded at all, save only as they are claimed to be represented by the delegates who are sent by the 6,000 primary-club-men. But what is the true conception of a convention? I think it is that of a body composed of delegates who, as nearly as may be practicable, represent all the diverse views of the people themselves. They do not go to represent merely the majority or one faction in a party, but all the voters of a party. Delegates are sent because every citizen cannot attend. If we look at the matter in the light of policy and safety, especially when the position is so critical as it now is in New York, we are sure to reach the same result. The views of the majority, and of every subdivision, held

together by principles and good faith to the party, should be consulted, for the double purpose of acting in the light of their real opinions, and of causing them to feel that they have been treated with due consideration. In that way only the most votes can be secured ; and all ways to the contrary are not only wanting in statesmanship, but they are even below the instincts of self-preservation. In making selections of delegates in the primary districts, it is inevitable that, to a certain extent, the majority must decide, and may exclude representation of the fractions. But this is not because the justice of the principle fails, but because it is not convenient to carry it further. The people do not become disaffected when that is omitted which it is not practicable to do, but when that is refused which, being right in itself, is also practicable.

A State convention is only a step toward a great ascertainment of the views of the people themselves, and the national delegates to be selected by it should fairly represent all the varieties of large and honest sentiment which it has disclosed. Those who may stand for these various views, so far from being pledged to silence and concealment of the real facts, in the light of which the action of the National Convention ought to be taken, should have it for their duty, as it is their right, to advocate the opinions they represent. This would give to a National Convention the counterpoise of opinion, and the means of a fair and wise judgment,



which would as much add to the justice and wisdom as it would to the moral force of its determinations. And above all things else, it would insure harmony and co-operation by causing every voter to feel that he and his views had been fairly represented and fairly heard, and that in accepting the final decision, he only yielded to the decision of a tribunal as just and wise as its decisions are final and unavoidable. But, on the other hand, what can be more exasperating to the voter, or more calculated to produce hostile combinations, than to see his voice, and that of tens of thousands who share his views, silenced in the National Convention by the proscriptive vote of a State convention majority, as has just been done in Pennsylvania, where 133 delegates have imposed a degrading silence upon 113 other delegates, and have, practically, deprived the constituents of the latter of all representation at Chicago?

A Bench of Judges or a Legislature are bodies made up of public officers for whom the people have voted, and who are required to act by majorities; but the selection of delegates and the action of a subordinate convention are neither official nor final action, but are, I repeat, only stages in a process the aims and ends of which are simply to ascertain what are the opinions of the people and who are the candidates whom they wish an opportunity to vote for. In such a process it is absurd to say that the majority has a right to suppress the views of the minority; for to know the wishes of

the whole people is the very fact sought. It is only the final action of the National Convention—after all opinion-seeking has ended—which is the executive act in which the will of the majority must be accepted as decisive.

That action of the majority, after hearing all opinions, no good Republican will, for any light reason, refuse to accept. If any theory of the Independents goes beyond this, I must regard it as untenable; and every practice of the partisans which, further than this, encroaches upon the rights of minorities, or the freedom of citizens, I must hold to be not only tyrannical, but hostile to the interests of a great party.

It is, then, a plain prostitution of the authority and privileges of party leaders when they are employed to coerce the selection of candidates. To make use of the subserviency of primaries or the proceedings of conventions, in order to procure the adoption of candidates thus selected, or to suppress, by instructions, the opinions of the minority, is not only a form of despotism, but an invasion of the rights and an insult to the manhood of the voter.

III. My wish to avoid exasperation of feeling would incline me to milder, even if less adequate language; but, by adopting a part of an editorial of the leading Republican journal in the interior of the State, I can, in the same words, both show how the Utica Conven-

tion was got together, and illustrate the state of feeling which it has intensified. It says :

“ But there is a striking similarity between the make-up and manipulation of the State conventions in Pennsylvania and New York. In both States most of the preliminary work was done by the crank-turners of the ‘machine.’ Times and places were chosen with a skill which disciplined ‘cracksmen’ might envy, and modes and measures resorted to which would have done honor to the most accomplished strategist. In two thirds of the State there was no fair expression, and only in localities where the ‘machine’ men were novices in ‘machine’ tactics had the undisciplined Republican electors the slightest chance of being heard without unseemly contest.

“ The choice of delegates was ‘a put-up job.’ The plan of operations was carefully and minutely mapped out at headquarters. Trusty and well-instructed lieutenants were assigned to each district. These had their sergeants in every county, and these their corporals in every town. Success was made the test of fidelity, and rewards were to follow in proportion to the success achieved. No man could be a tide-waiter who did not carry his ward. No man could be a harbor master who did not carry his county, and no man could be so much as thought of for Canal Superintendent, or Auditor, or State Assessor, or Bank

“Superintendent, who did not take his district with him  
“to the Utica Convention. It was a race for the spoils  
“on the part of the subordinates and a race for the  
“presidency on the part of the chiefs.”\*

There were, in all, four hundred and ten delegates, of whom fifty-six were sent by the six thousand members of the New York City primaries—that being the number due to the fifty thousand Republican voters of the city. The policy described in the *Evening Journal* resulted in the defeat of George William Curtis in a Staten Island primary by a small majority. Thus a great body of the most enlightened public opinion of the State was deprived of an able and accomplished representative, and the convention of a delegate, than whom no one more worthy of a seat was among its members.

It appears to have been a part of the original scheme for the convention to give positive instructions to the delegates to vote *solid* for the candidates it should select, if not to take from the congressional districts the selection of their delegates. But when the strength of the disaffection manifested itself in decisive evidence that General Grant had not the popularity upon which the call of the convention was based, these desperate parts of the programme were abandoned, or at least greatly modified. It was shown that in each of the seven State conventions of the party, the national del-

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\* *Albany Evening Journal*, March 19, 1880.

legates had been selected by the delegates of the congressional districts, and that, when in 1860 the attempt had been made to have the convention name the delegates, it had been defeated by a unanimous vote. The extent to which the managers ventured to encroach upon the liberties of the districts in naming delegates—and the *Herald* says they went as far as they dared—is shown in this contrast between the resolution voted down and that adopted;—the former proposing that the district delegates in each district “report the names of two delegates *selected by them*,” for Chicago, “*according to the usage heretofore practiced* in Republican conventions in this State;” while the resolution which was adopted on the motion of ex-Collector Arthur, requests the district delegates to “report *for the consideration of the convention two names*,” etc., and makes no reference to former usage. It was not, therefore, a complete usurpation at once, but only an installment. Breadth of view, toleration of independent convictions, and comprehension of the spirit and power of the Republican influences which are outside of party lines, were but narrowly and timidly represented in the convention.

The crisis was reached upon the vote of instructions to sustain General Grant. The regular resolutions submitted directed the seventy delegates from New York “to use their most earnest and united efforts to secure “his nomination.” A motion was made to amend by a

declaration "in favor of the nominee of the Chicago Convention." The motion was on substituting this amendment. Mr. Conkling had just made a long and impassioned speech (interrupted by cheers for Blaine) in favor of the resolutions. The 410 delegates so carefully selected for this crisis—so largely reflecting the organized partisanship of the State—so many of whom were under pledges as servile as those which they were seeking to impose—were before him. They were to vote on a question which would test not merely the choice of the delegates, but the forecast of the managers and the truth of the assumptions under which this convention had been called. The vote showed 180 in favor of the amendment and 217 against it. The resolution was finally adopted by the same vote. This result, of course, was a crushing demonstration of the utter mistake and misconception of public opinion upon which the convention had been called. It was not less a decisive evidence of the declining power of the machine managers. It is needless, after our review of the state of opinion outside partisan circles, to enter into any speculations as to what share of the voters of the State would favor General Grant. When we find that even in such a body, and under such circumstances, only a majority of thirty-seven appeared—that is, for every *seven* delegates who supported the conclusions reached there were six opposed—the inferences are plain enough.

## IV. The instructions call for a few observations.

The *Tribune* and other journals have claimed that the instruction to "use the most earnest and united "efforts" for Grant's nomination at Chicago, is only binding on the delegates at large. It plainly was not so understood by the convention, nor can any such limitation be drawn from the series of resolutions. They are absolute and sweeping both as to method and as to time. They are plainly intended to suppress all opinion, all speech, and all facts, except as they may come from the lips of the majority. Nothing in the form of servile obedience, nothing in theory more repugnant to the objects of a State convention, and, in my opinion, nothing more antagonistic to the interests and duty of the Republican party, or to political truth and justice, could well have been devised. The only just ground upon which the instructions can be avoided (and it must be with some hesitation that a delegate, holding his place under them, can do what, under a free appointment, would be a duty) is to denounce them as beyond the authority of the convention, and a flagrant invasion of the unwritten law of political life and of the rights of individual free speech. Whatever may be the result at Chicago, it ought not to be doubted that in the end this view of the matter will prevail. Neither the interests of the Republican party nor the usefulness of its conventions requires any concealment of the public opin-

ion. It is only folly and blindness to attempt to suppress it. The facts will be known, and the attempt to conceal them will be attributed to fear and to fraud.

On the basis of the vote of the convention, we must assume that as many as *thirty* delegates (out of the seventy from New York to Chicago), who represent nearly two millions of people, are not only to have no vote in the National Convention, but are not even to be allowed to bring before it the fact of the great volume of dissenting public opinion of which they are to be the dumb representatives.

This, when justice and conciliation are essential to a full vote! This, on the new theory that 217 delegates to a Republican State convention have a right to insist that 180 other delegates shall not have their opinions represented in a national convention! I speak of the thirty delegates being silent at Chicago, because it is preposterous to pretend that to disclose such opposition and disaffection in New York, on the floor of the Chicago Convention, is compatible with the "most earnest and united efforts" for General Grant in the sense of the Utica Convention. It is clear from Mr. Conkling's speech, and the whole action of the convention on the subject, that the suppression of such damaging facts and an effort of united subserviency, after the theory of a united South, was precisely what was intended by the majority.



I do not mean to say that a majority of the members of the convention consciously connived at a suppression of truth, or are guilty of a willful attempt to gain an end by false pretenses. There were worthy men in this convention who did not lose sight of justice and principles, and a few were fearless enough to bravely speak for them. But there were many more servile partisans, from whom the associations of the primaries and the discipline of the machine had taken all the elements of manliness and foresight of which, by nature, they were capable. And in justice to the superior delegates that come from the interior of the State, it should be mentioned that 46 out of the 56 delegates who were sent from the New York City primaries voted among the majority of 217—a number, it will be noted, exceeding by nine votes the majority by which the instructions were carried. The most servile vote determined the result.

V. Another point in the proceedings of the convention deserves notice. The decision was not merely that there should be a solid vote and effort at Chicago for General Grant, *but it was also against any declaration that New York would support the nominee of the Chicago Convention.* The convention did not declare that it would stand by that nominee, although every effort for General Grant had failed. I hope this apparently sinister omission was only an oversight in the desperate struggle of the managers to carry their scheme. Still,

it cannot be forgotten that it is capable of being made the basis of a threat at Chicago, and it has all the more significance in the relations it bears to the attitude of general rebellion in New York already referred to. I cannot think that the candid and thoughtful members of that convention reflected sufficiently upon the reprehensible position in which a great State places herself when she refuses a pledge to abide by the action of the national convention of a party. They cannot have considered with how complete a justification they furnish the Independents, and every form of dissent, for all their refusals to support candidates or to vote.

VI. The resolutions demand some attention. We need not trouble ourselves about their awkward and confused language, so much commented on in the public press. Their substance is as follows:

1. "The Republicans, etc., re-affirm the principles "and patriotic purposes of the Republican party, heretofore declared and *faithfully acted upon*."

2. They next declare that "the *safety of the nation* is "again imperiled" by the acts of Democrats in Maine "and in several of the Southern States," and that in presence of these grave "and threatening dangers" they pledge the ability of New York to cast its vote for General Grant.

3. They declare that they "*repose absolute trust*" in General Grant, and present him as a candidate.

4. They declare that the objections to a third term have no application when there has been an intermediate term.

5. The re-election of General Grant is next "declared "of *urgent* importance;" and then follow the instructions already referred to.

The reports even of journals which lend their sanction to General Grant's nomination, declare that the reading of the resolutions was attended by "Hurrahs "for Blaine, when long-continued cheering followed," and that "at the close of the reading there was long-continued applause *and hisses*." \* The first speech that followed the resolutions proposed Blaine instead of Grant, affirming that Blaine is the first choice of New York, which declaration, as the same journal declares, was followed "by long-continued applause" and "cries "of Correct." †

What is the real significance of such resolutions, the different parts of which it is by no means easy to recon-

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\* *Times*, Feb. 26.

† The *Times* says the reader of the resolutions stumbled, at which a delegate cried Hurrah for Blaine, "when long-continued cheering followed." The *Tribune* says the name of Blaine "was like a spark "flying to powder. The galleries burst into a flame of cheering. It was "as hearty and general as the Grant cheering had been mechanical." The *Herald* declares "Blaine would have had a majority had the convention been a fair expression of the New York Republicans." It was therefore clear enough before the vote that the unanimity and enthusiasm for General Grant on which the managers had counted was very far from existing.

cile, either as between themselves or with the action and views of the leaders in the convention?

1. Look to the first clause. It may have two very different meanings.

(1) Does it mean that *all* the old resolutions and declarations of the party are re-affirmed and adopted, and that they have all been faithfully acted upon? Or, (2) is it intended to declare that *such parts only* are adopted as have been (according to the views of the managers) faithfully acted upon?

If the first be the intended meaning—if, in other words, the convention intended to declare (1) that it adopts and reaffirms the prior platforms and resolutions (including, of course, those adopted at Cincinnati four years ago), and (2) that such platforms and resolutions “have been faithfully acted upon” (which would seem to be the only honest intent of the language, and the one therefore to be accepted)—then, what becomes of all the charges to the effect that the present administration has not been faithful upon the Southern question? How can General Grant, if elected, be faithful—acting under the same adopted old platforms—if he shall do otherwise than tread in the faithful footsteps of President Hayes? And how does the “urgent importance of his re-election” appear if he is only to be faithful as President Hayes has been faithful?

So, in regard to the civil service question, if the present administration has faithfully acted upon the

principles of the Cincinnati platform, on what ground does Mr. Conkling justify himself in refusing to give the administration any support? Why has he aided and abetted Mr. Cornell, first in resisting the order not to interfere with the freedom of elections, and next in refusing to resign when requested so to do, by reason of such disobedience? Upon what statesmanlike view of duty or policy toward a party or the country can a State convention omit to renominate or even to notice a president whom it declares logically, though not openly or honorably, to have been faithful, and against whom it can bring no just complaint?

2. Great offense has been given to a large class of thoughtful and intelligent voters by the fact that the subsequent parts of the resolutions without warrant put the Republican party before the country as if ready to surrender its principles and its independence, and to rely absolutely upon the reputation and discretion of a single citizen to rescue the country from an alleged exigency. Those who fear the effects of a third term regard it as tenfold more dangerous if a third-term president is to take his office upon such conditions. They insist that it is above all things important that the party should clearly repledge itself to its principles, should insist on their being carried out in practice, and that it should cause to be understood that its hopes and its strength are believed to rest on the popular support of these principles, and not on its ability to ally itself with the

military reputation of any man. They hold the party to be pre-eminently a party of principles, strong in the support of the better opinion of the nation, and sure to be weakened if it forgets its pledges or rests on the menace of physical force. They maintain that nothing can do more to demoralize a party and increase the domination of desperate party manipulators, than a general assent that the virtues and the principles which have heretofore given it vitality have been forgotten in an admitted necessity of putting absolute trust in any single individual. There is no such necessity. The pretense of it is a part of an audacious scheme of desperate politicians. General Grant, they believe, is too good a patriot and too clear-sighted a citizen to allow that our situation is desperate like that of the Roman Republic when it put absolute trust in a dictator, or like that of Russia now that it puts absolute trust in a general. The resolutions are therefore, in this regard, unstatesmanlike, disastrous, and unwarranted by the facts. They are founded upon a misconception of the public intelligence, and reflect the mere politician's view of the people. They are as a consequence eminently calculated to damage the prospects of the candidate they would promote, and to cause a suspicion of ulterior views, of which I believe the authors are not guilty. Without the least pretense that General Grant, had he been president, would have done otherwise than President Hayes has done, and without the least basis for

assuming that, in the future, General Grant could do better than the present administration, the party is put before the country, in these bungling resolutions, in the humiliating attitude of admitting that its fate depends, not upon any principles or any policy, but on the chance of one man's election. This transparent piece of partisan strategy and misrepresentation not only causes minds of the highest order to distrust the party, but it causes the aims of the convention itself to be distrusted. It both strengthens the Independents and puts weapons in the hands of the Democrats.

VII. A word should be said in regard to what these resolutions have not referred to. The Chicago Convention should have the justice to believe that the great body of New York Republicans, outside those who have pledged themselves to follow the machine, right or wrong, recognize the duty of an honorable and reasonable allegiance to the Republican party of the nation, and to those whom that party has selected to execute its national policy. They hold that the common courtesies of political life, as well as the vital conditions of party success, impose upon the party organization of a State every obligation to defend and aid that of the nation which can exist in the party organizations of a county or city to support that of the State. They, therefore, ask, why these resolutions make no reference to the present administration? Was

it mere forgetfulness, or was it in a spirit of hostility, bravado, and rebellion, that a usage was disregarded which has heretofore been sanctioned in every State of the Union and in every year of the national existence? Are they to fear that General Grant—who has fought for the whole Union, and who has heretofore been supposed to be above mere pride and revenge—has been selected because it was believed he would sanction defiance and rebellion in New York? Or are the partisan leaders, for their own purposes, putting General Grant in a false position before the people? I venture to say that if it was generally believed by the intelligent voters of New York (as I do not believe) that General Grant would, in any way, sanction this first example in our political history, of the party managers of a State conducting hostilities for a whole presidential term against the principles of a national convention and the statesman to whom it intrusted the executive department—he would not have the least chance of being elected president. For such voters can see the disintegration, the factions, the angry strife, and the demoralization and feebleness to which such vindictive and sectional warfare leads.

VIII. Mr. Conkling's speech is so essentially a part of the proceedings of the convention that I must notice it. But I wish to avoid everything of a personal nature, and I think that Mr. Conkling's influence and



responsibility, as compared with the machine and the banded partisans who follow it, have been greatly over-rated. He is only spokesman and engineer for the time. Like all those working machines, he must conform to their theory and structure. The peril, the spirit, and tendency in New York would be much the same if a very ordinary politician was put in Mr. Conkling's place; just as the naming of a new general does not change the Jesuits, or the election of a new Pope much affect the hierarchy. It may take the genius of a Loyola to devise an enduring despotism, as it required the cunning of Burr and Van Buren to create the machine; but a very ordinary politician may turn the crank. Mr. Conkling complained that the voice of the galleries was not in harmony with that of the floor, and for this many think there was a far deeper cause than he comprehended. \*

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\* One of the leading Republican journals of Western New York, published at Utica, where Mr. Conkling resides, has this comment in its editorial of the next day: "Senator Conkling felt called upon to rebuke the expression of the galleries. This is one of the most remarkable expressions of popular feeling. Admission to *all parts* of the house was by *ticket*, and *only the State committee and Mr. Conkling's own special friends* in this city had the apportionment of these tickets. The persons who are not supposed to favor General Grant or Senator Conkling were not the recipients of any courtesies. Gentlemen of standing have complained that they were *refused admission* by the local managers." . . . "No secret was made of the purpose to pack the galleries for Grant. Surprise was therefore natural when it became evident that the overwhelming sentiment of the multitude was for Blaine."—*Utica Morning Herald*, February 26.

Neither principles, nor the idea of there being principles, recognized by the party, are suggested in the speech. In theory, Mr. Conkling seems to agree with Burr, that the party is a military organization bound to act as a unit and to obey orders without question. The conception that it has duties or any moral standards is nowhere hinted. There is not an indication that the party now controls, or is responsible for, the executive department at Washington, or that the Republicans of New York have any other relations to President Hayes than they have to the viceroy of India or to the king of the Fiji Islands.

He does not present the issue as one in which the party may trust the intelligence, patriotism, and conscience of the country, but he tells us there is "an emergency" and a "crisis"—there is to be a "contest memorable for its *desperation*, not only before the people have decided it, but, I fear, *afterwards*."

There "may be a disputed electoral count, and a "train of evils which no prophet can foretell." Who is the "man in a crisis like this? Have the Republicans of New York no opinion who, in the presence of "such a crisis, is most certain to be elected—*is most certain to be lawfully seated after he is elected?*" "I ask every member to lay his hand on his heart and answer—upon whose name, achievements, character, "and strength can the party, more than upon any other,

*“safely repose?”* I must regard it as a misfortune that such words of fear—that such admissions of desperation, and such parodies of probability—should ever have been uttered in such a place. But Mr. Conkling is entitled to this fact in mitigation: He had heard the well-balanced cheers, and might well feel premonitions of the character of the vote which, within the hour, was to prove that among every thirteen of the delegates before him, there were six who repudiated the whole theory and assumption on which they had been brought together. He was suddenly called upon to attempt to carry their votes by fear when their reason could not be convinced. Does he mean to ask the people to act as if in the coming election there is to be a crisis in which a military leader, but not a civilian, may reasonably hope to fill the presidential chair to which he has been elected? Such suggestions, I repeat, were likely to be effective with the many pledged partisans in the convention, especially when the apparent alternative was an instant and humiliating overthrow of the machine and its managers. But they are poor evidence of the spontaneous popularity of General Grant. They are a poor kind of argument with which to keep in the Republican ranks the great numbers of those who care little for it after its principles have been abandoned for chieftainship. That class of voters will not even believe that General Grant will consent to be a candidate on such a platform.

IX. The same methods of defiance and coercion which the managers of the machine have long employed in New York are now to be extended to a national convention. The delegates to Chicago are not sent to freely consult for the common welfare, or at liberty to act with those from other States upon a basis of compromise and mutual forbearance. Like ambassadors under detailed orders from an independent sovereignty, they are required to declare an ultimatum at the outset. Whatever the consequences, and against whatever majority, they are to use "their most earnest" and united efforts to enforce against the nation the demands of 217 delegates who had their way at Utica. Procrustes' iron bed is not only to determine the length of all who are put upon it, but of all under the roof where it is to be set up. Such superlative instructions can only be obeyed by trying to prevent the nomination of any other candidate, as well as by insisting, by importunity and threats, upon the nomination of General Grant.

The instructions are not limited, even to a long continued effort, but are equally mandatory and absolute during every hour of the service of the delegates. What would be the consequence if the delegates from every other State should come with the same instructions? There would be a dead-lock, and partisan madness demonstrated from the beginning. If it be said that at some time, after a long contest, the instruc-

tions must be deemed to have expired, and the delegates be held to have the liberty needed to do their work, the answer is, that by that time the instructions will have made the contest far more selfish, acrimonious, and protracted than but for them it would have been ; and after all finally leave the same delegates—but more passionate and impracticable—to exercise the identical freedom of speech and action which common sense and common justice, to say nothing of statesmanship, required that they should have had from the beginning. If the hope be that out of this first case of enforcing instructions, New York may gain an advantage over its sister States, it is a purpose of which any one of her worthier citizens will be ashamed. If the thought was, as Mr. Conkling's speech seems to imply, to give New York the prestige of being unanimous, when so contrary was the fact, we need not stop to consider which is the more striking, the folly or guilt of such an attempt.

X. Still the Utica Convention made clear some hopeful facts. It showed a waning power in the machine, which will doubtless cause more desperate efforts at Chicago. The significance of the fact that, but for the servile vote of 46 out of the 56 delegates from the New York City primaries, both General Grant and the instructions would have been defeated, cannot be disguised. In 1876, Mr. Conkling was himself sustained,

as the candidate of New York, by a vote in the convention of 250 to only 113 against him. Now it would not only be absurd to present him as a candidate, but even the great name of General Grant, when urged by Mr. Conkling, receives only 217 votes to 180 negatives. In other words, the machine majority has fallen in four years from 137 to only 37.

The leading journals so interpret the result at Utica. The *Herald* says, the Conkling star "shines with a faded lustre," and that, had contesting delegations been admitted, General Grant would have been defeated. The *Tribune* regards the result as equivalent to a defeat of the ex-president, and urges Mr. Blaine all the more vigorously. The *Times* says, Mr. Conkling merely "floated with a current," and gives the figures showing the decline of his influence. The *Post* refers to his change of tone "as explained by his consciousness that "his hold upon his party in the State is not so strong "as it was." I will not quote from journals which express their views in far less courteous terms. The changed tone of Mr. Conkling himself is of interest so far as it fairly reflects the actual change in public opinion within the last four years. It may be illustrated in Mr. Conkling's own words. In the New York Convention, in 1876, he uses this language: "Who are these "men who, in the *newspapers* and elsewhere, are crack-  
"ing the whip over Republicans and playing school-  
"master to the party? . . Who have attempted to be-

“*little and befool* Republican administrations and to “parade their own thin veneering of purity? . . . Some “of these worthies masquerade as *Reformers*. Their “vocation and ministry is to lament the sins of other “people. . . . They are wolves in sheep’s clothing. “Their real object is office and plunder. When Dr. “Johnson defined patriotism as the last resource of a “scoundrel, he was unconscious of the undeveloped “capabilities of the word reform.”

In the four years that have intervened since Mr. Conkling thought such language discreet (and only its need to show a movement of public thought induces me to quote what its author very likely now regrets), he has seen the ablest journals of the State, every year growing more powerful, insisting upon the need of reform—even in matters most managed by himself. It is to the credit of his discretion, therefore, that at Utica he did not challenge the newspapers. Within that time, Mr. Conkling has been himself defeated in a national convention, because known to be hostile to reform. Within that time, Mr. Conkling has seen a reform platform adopted by the nation, by reason of which he has himself become the greatest “belittler” . . . of Republican “administrations.” It is therefore to the credit of his discretion that at Utica he sneered neither at reform nor at reformers. He was, indeed, relatively conciliatory. “I would *now* . . . that I might cast a vote on every “question *agreeing with every other member of the con-*

"*vention*," are the opening words of his late speech at Utica! Still the *Times*, the only New York city journal of national influence which, even in a qualified manner, accepts General Grant's nomination, declares that "many of those who desired Grant severed "from his old associations, presumably broadened by "his experience and observations, . . . do not want "him as the candidate of the Camerons and the Conk-  
"lings, secured by manipulated caucuses and pledged  
"delegates;" \* and that "a good opportunity was lost  
"to place the Republican party in the State in line with  
"the most advanced principles of party policy." †

In the light of such facts it is certainly not difficult to see the tendency of public opinion in New York, or how far the Utica convention failed to respond to that tendency.

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\* See *Times* Editorial, Feb. 22, 1880.

† *Times* Editorial, Feb. 26, 1880.



## CHAPTER IX.

THE THIRD TERM ISSUE. GENERAL GRANT, MR. BLAINE, MR. SHERMAN, MR. EDMUNDS, AND MR. WASHBURN AS CANDIDATES. THE CIVIL SERVICE QUESTION.

THERE is, I think, no very decisive evidence as to which would receive the most votes as a candidate in New York, General Grant or Mr. Blaine. That General Grant is, as a man, beyond all comparison the most popular, admits of no question. The opposition to him for the presidency appears under three forms :

1. Objections to a third term.
2. Fears of a revival of old scandals and of the influence of bad advisers.
3. His attitude on the question of civil service reform.

I. The general objections to a third term being much the same in New York as elsewhere, it does not come within my plan to consider them. In the appendix will be found the resolution adopted by the New York convention in 1875, as well as those adopted in some other States and by Congress. They assume and

they are proof of the existence of a profound and pervading public opinion against a third presidential term. They make no distinction between a third consecutive term and any other third term. They imply that the bare statement of their conclusions carries that weight of conviction in the public mind which makes all argument needless. It is the strangest phenomenon of the times that a fact so significant of the real opinions of the people—whether that opinion be sound or unsound—should now be so generally ignored or met with sneers. The views of the subject which these resolutions express have, for more than two generations, been regarded as a part of the unwritten constitution of the country.

Their acceptance by parties and statesmen during all that time has been regarded as evidence of wisdom and patriotism. The fact that Washington and his successors refused a third term has been made familiar to each generation of young men as a part of the claims of those statesmen upon the gratitude of their country. The many men who seriously object to a third term are among the most conscientious and independent of the voters. It is, I think, in vain to expect to suddenly change their views. Such resolutions, in the journals and before popular audiences—clearly showing as they do that only five years ago the great body of Republicans held the views which so many still retain—could be used by the Democrats with the most damaging

effect. With great force, they would argue that nothing but the desperate exigency of the party, and the dangerous ambition of its leaders, could have forced them to so reckless a disregard of their own professed principles and of the hallowed precedents of the nation. The third term issue has been treated as if the whole question were the mere balance of argument on one side or the other. It has hardly been noticed how far that issue is from meeting the situation in a State where the vote is close. The question which should be made decisive of the wisdom and safety of a third term nomination is this: *Will those opposed to it promptly surrender their scruples and their fears, and go over and vote with those who have insisted upon giving them only a third term candidate? Can those on one side feel sure of making converts and supporters of those on the other? These are the vital questions.* Practically, it amounts to nothing, even should the concession be made that the weight of argument is against the third term objectors, unless they are promptly made to vote against the cherished principles of their whole lives. Men will readily compromise on candidates when principles are not involved; but they will not so readily surrender long cherished convictions. Such a demand made upon them is far more likely to provoke suspicions of the motives which so suddenly emboldened party leaders to make it. Ordinarily, when the questions between

candidates raise issues of principles, their application only extends to a few years of mere administration. But the third term issue involves, in the view of the objectors, the very counterpoise and safety of our institutions for all future time. It demands the repudiation of a maxim held sacred by everybody until challenged in the stress of a campaign. A revolution in the public opinion and the public conscience is required to bring a particular candidate into office, whom perhaps half the people do not think the best, quite irrespective of the special objection against him. Without, therefore, entering at all upon the merits of the argument on either side, I must regard the third term objection as one highly dangerous for the Republicans to encounter in New York.

The force of the objections to a third term by General Grant would be materially weakened if the two other objections to his candidacy could be removed—that is, if the people felt sure he would keep his bad advisers at a distance, and would return to his earlier reform methods in the civil service.

2. The second main objection to General Grant is the danger that he will yield to the influence of Mr. Conkling and Mr. Cameron and that class of politicians by whom he is manifestly being championed, and that therefore the scandals and abuses of his former administration will be renewed. The strength of this fear is well expressed in the declaration already quoted from

the *Times*. The *Nation* expresses the same objection when it says, "Mr. Conkling was General Grant's "favorite senator, and the machine, as we now see "it, may be said to have been built up under General "Grant, and no one had more to do with building it up "than Mr. Conkling."

No class of independent voters, I think, will question the honesty or the patriotism of General Grant or his claims upon the gratitude of the country. But they fear he will again carry military methods into civil affairs, by surrounding himself with a few great politicians whose advice, like that of a military staff, will be accepted, and whose perpetual intervention will blind him to the real sentiment of the country and to the corruption and favoritism in the offices. They see in it a revival of the old system of Burr and Van Buren. If favorites are to forestall his action, who are to be the favorites? Are they to be the same men whose malign influence made possible the whisky frauds, the District of Columbia abuses, the Babcock, Belknap and New York custom house scandals?

For four years the country has had an administration under which industry has prospered, the public honor and credit have been maintained, the Republican party has gained strength, official life has been growing more respectable. Having inherited many scandals, it has allowed neither scandals nor corruption in its own time, and will bequeath no burden for the party to bear

in the next campaign. It is significant enough that the scheming leaders are opposed to extending the term of a President who, with difficulties unusually great, has honored the party with such an administration. The people wish to know whether it is to be the President or favorite senators and partisan manipulators who are to control patronage and the officials—whether the New York and Pennsylvania spoils system, or a system based on character and capacity, are to prevail at Washington. They inquire, What are the *secret motives* which cause the rejection and the slight of President Hayes for the second term he deserves, in order to force General Grant, against the conscientious convictions of so many worthy citizens, into a third term for which no good reasons are given?

3. We have seen the decided attitude taken in the constitution of the Independents on the civil service reform question.

The position of General Grant upon the question of reform in the civil service is peculiar. He was the first President to recommend it in his message of December 5, 1870, in which he declared "that the elevation and "purification of the civil service of the government will "be hailed with approval by the whole people of the "United States." Under his administration, civil service rules, in their nature efficient for bringing about such a reform, were under great embarrassments and with many shortcomings enforced, until the members of

Congress (whose patronage was being more and more interfered with) refused longer to vote the money needed for the work. As a consequence, President Grant felt compelled to suspend the execution of the rules. In his last special message on the subject (that of April 18, 1874), in which he requested an appropriation, he declares "that the rules have resulted beneficially" in various ways to which he refers. He also declares they may be made "to still more materially benefit the public service." In his next annual message, he again appealed in vain to Congress for an appropriation to enable him to carry forward the work of reform. He further declares it would be a "source of mortification to him" if the reform should fail for want of means to carry it on; but that if left without an appropriation, it would be suspended. He was far more patriotic and disinterested than members of Congress or the party leaders.

It therefore seems plain that General Grant, if left at liberty to act upon his own views of official duty and of the public interest, would, so far as furnished by Congress with the necessary means, go forward with a salutary reform in the civil service. He is entitled to great credit for what he has done in that direction.

But here is a great anomaly. *The party leaders who now most urge General Grant's nomination are the very men who most embarrassed his reform policy, and who most earnestly advised the refusal of all appropriations*

*for continuing it. Have they adopted a reform policy, or do they believe that General Grant has changed his views on the subject?* Is the General Grant whom they present as a candidate, the original adviser of a reform policy, still holding himself ready to put that policy into practice; or is their candidate, in their estimation, General Grant converted to the theory of Congress and to the views of the leaders of the New York spoils system? These are vital questions on which the people may well demand decisive information. General Grant, so far as I am aware, has not yet spoken on these points, and he is entitled to all assumptions in his favor which are due to his patriotic and manly character. But the version of General Grant's words, appearing in Mr. Young's reports of conversations abroad, is well calculated to create doubts whether General Grant's views have not by foreign travel been made less favorable to reform. Without clearer statements on these points, and without the most decisive commitments to a reform policy in the Chicago platform, I cannot think the New York friends of reform can be counted on to accept General Grant's attitude as satisfactory. Certainly, very much will depend on whether the Chicago platform appears to embody the theory of the State conventions of Massachusetts and Vermont, or the theory of those of Pennsylvania and New York.

It is no part of my purpose to discuss the question



whether the strength of the Republicans would be advanced by an adherence to a reform policy. That the abandonment of that policy would lose votes in New York is too plain for question. It would take away the most tangible and effective argument on which Republicans could make their appeals to the best class of voters. It would subject the party to the charge of having long practiced hypocrisy. It would give the New York system of spoils and the machine managers a victory that would greatly increase the disgust and the disaffection of all the more independent voters. It would leave the Democrats at liberty to raise a far more effective reform cry than they did in 1876. It would place the Republican party on the wrong side of a permanent issue sure to grow more and more important in our politics, both State and national. It would precipitate between the machine system and those who stand for freedom and purity in politics a conflict hardly less irrepressible than that between freedom and slavery.

At the time when we see the higher sentiment triumphing over Kearneyism in California and over Jingoism in Great Britain, it would be a sorry spectacle indeed to see the Republican party repudiate its highest principles and abandon its best work, that it may set up the New York machine and swear allegiance to its managers at Washington. The *only* one of the great New York city journals which, even conditionally, supports General Grant, declares that "the Republican party has

“been and is fairly and deliberately committed to the reform of the civil service. And we may add that no party was ever more bound by *expediency* as well as “honor to redeem its pledges.” \* Without entering into so complicated a question, I give in the appendix some extracts which show how far the Republicans are committed to that reform, and the state of public opinion on the subject in New York.

II. *Mr. Blaine* would be unacceptable to the Independent and many other voters in New York, from objections of a general nature, and especially by reason of his attitude on the civil service question. As the readers of the *Nation* are good examples of the most doubtful of the voters which a good Republican candidate and platform may win, its language may best present these general objections. “Mr. Blaine” (it says) “is striving hard for the presidency, yet we “know of no opinion looking to the constructive work “of government which he has preached, or with which “he is identified. We know of no bill affecting any “great public interest which he has introduced, debated “instructively, or amended. We do not know, and we “do not believe anybody else knows, what his views “are about any of the problems, such as currency, taxation, administration, now pending or impending. “On none of these subjects has he rendered any aid

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\* *N. Y. Times*, March 12, 1880.

"in forming or moulding public opinion." . . . "The  
"one thing said of him is that he is magnetic," . . .  
"probably the oddest qualification (standing as it does  
"alone) for the chief executive office of the busiest and  
"most powerfully democratic State in the world."\*

Mr. Blaine is equally identified with the obstructive measures of Congress toward General Grant's policy of reform and with the difficulties which the present administration has encountered upon the same subject. He has no faith in reform, and has done nothing to aid it. By nature and habit he is an intense partisan. It is not long since a member of his family—naturally presumed to represent his views—poured through more than twenty numbers of the *New York Tribune* an amount of sarcasm and ridicule of reform and reformers which quite surpassed even Mr. Conkling's sneering speeches on the same subject. The fact that the *Tribune* has, like Mr. Conkling, of late treated the subject in a different spirit, and that it has recognized Mr. Curtis and the reformers or Independents as men "who count for much in our politics," may illustrate the candor of that journal and its sagacity in detecting the drift of public opinion, but it is far from proving that the views of its candidate for the presidency have changed. It will require something from Mr. Blaine himself, and a very unequivocal platform, to

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\* *Nation*, March 25, 1880.

make him acceptable to the class of voters to whom the *Tribune* refers.

III. *Mr. Sherman* must have some hold of the good opinion of the people by reason of his successful administration of the treasury. But both President Grant and President Hayes have had occasion to exhibit more firmness and courage in connection with the financial question than have ever been demanded of Mr. Sherman. Had he waited for a nomination until made by others—or, having resolved to make a bad precedent by nominating himself, had he first resigned his position—he would have had and deserved a much stronger support from the better class of voters. He has administered the treasury department, so far as appointments, promotions and removals are concerned, upon principles compatible neither with the party platform of 1876 nor with the policy of the President. He is intensely partisan in his theories, and a believer in patronage, manipulation, and spoils. The introduction of reform methods into the custom house in New York city was required by the President, and they have been carried forward faithfully and courageously by Colonel Burt and other worthy officers, without any sympathy or real support from Mr. Sherman. The holding of his position at the head of the greatest department of the government, and the using of his official influence and that of his subordinates to pro-

mote his own nomination, are, to say the least, of very pernicious example, and a great discredit to President Hayes's administration. When the *N. Y. Times* declares that "the secretary has no right to profit in his "ambition by direct disobedience of the President's "orders," and that "his general way of pushing his "plan is worse than an insult to the President,"\* it condemns actions which are fatal to the support of Mr. Sherman by the Independents or the Reformers, and which will, in the future, be regarded as the great mistakes of his official life.

IV. *Mr. Edmunds* so well unites an unassailable reputation with an unexceptionable record upon all great questions of principle, that there is no good reason why he should be objected to by any class of voters in New York. He may not be so much in sympathy as some others with the more partisan voters, but they are of all others the most certain to follow the party lead. A true convention of the Republican voters of New York would, I think, be found ready to approve the choice of Vermont and Massachusetts by indorsing the nomination of Senator Edmunds.

V. *Mr. Washburne* might, after all, be found to command quite as many votes as any other candidate in the State of New York. His official record is ample

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\* *Times* Editorial, Jan. 30, 1880.

assurance that he would give the country a pure and able administration. He is not affiliated with any ring or school in our partisan politics, and is therefore in a condition to be fairly independent and just to all. His great work of wisdom and benevolence during the Franco-German war has warmed the heart of the whole German race with gratitude toward him. There are 250,000 Germans in the city of New York alone; and all through the State there are the descendants of the old Dutch settlers, mingled with numerous recent immigrants, who would give fervor and vigor to his candidacy. While not, perhaps, directly committed to the policy of civil service reform, there is reason to believe that his sympathies are in that direction, and his high sense of honor and duty would make him faithful to the platform of his party.

## CHAPTER X.

WHAT THE NEW YORK MACHINE AND SPOILS SYSTEM  
NOW ARE IN THEORY AND PRACTICE. THEY HAVE  
DEGRADED OFFICIAL LIFE, AND PRODUCED A RE-  
BELLION IN THE PARTY.

IN the light of what has been said, we may have a full view of the New York machine and spoils system. The machine is the propelling and guiding force of politics exerted secretly by a very few persons, nearly all of whom are public officers. Its managers are supreme through the whole range of party action.

The machine is at the head of the spoils system which it propels. That system, in New York, includes much more than the abuses analogous to those in national administration, against which civil service reform is aimed. It embraces three separate parts or elements: (1) The primary associations and the management of elections. (2) The administrative methods, including appointments, removals, assessments, patronage, contracts, and jobs within the State. (3) Federal conventions, nominations, and patronage.

I. We have seen how far the New York system of primaries is indigenous and peculiar. In its theory, the management of politics is a distinct business, which requires trained politicians to carry it on. The public only need to vote and pay as they are required. The business must be conducted on principles essentially selfish, and must be made to pay as it proceeds. The theory of every other State (not even excepting Pennsylvania), that the initial meetings for the selection of delegates should be free and open to all true members of the party, is rejected in New York. In its place is set up the military system of Burr. A series of permanent clubs or companies is substituted. They must have members enough to make a pretense of popular representation, but they must not be so numerous as to become unmanageable. In a city of a million, 6,000 primary club men are sufficient. But no one must enter but by the will of the majority of the old members, and after a scrutiny that affords evidence of a compliant spirit. Pledges fatal to all salutary courage and all fidelity to high convictions must be exacted as guaranties against all attacks upon the system. No pledges to principles or duty are desirable, but only to the system, the orders, and the officers. The voters who have too much conscience and self-respect to thus put on the yoke, are excluded. The servile tools and the conscienceless deceivers may easily enter the gates. The primary club men thus selected and pledged are



the party. Their views and interests—or the machine policy they indorse—are for all practical purposes the opinion and platform of the Republican party of New York. Any failure of a member to act in the spirit of this system is good cause of expulsion. Such, in brief, is the New York primary system. And it hardly need be added that nothing was ever contrived better adapted to degrade the politics of a party, to dwarf the manhood of those who serve it, or to arouse the distrust of those who are repelled from its councils while adhering to its principles.

II. Administration within the party lines is in keeping with the conditions of entering them. No Republican, however worthy, is to be put in any office or place however low—nor is any one to be allowed to continue in any—except he is a member of a primary, or at least favors the system, and works or contributes for its support and for its managers. Partisan zeal, contributions, and services are paramount, as qualifications for the public service, to all character and all ability. The interests of the party are dearer than those of the country, and the party, and consequently the State, are best served by strengthening the system and the managers. Every candidate must pay for his nomination the price fixed by the managers. The holder of every office and place must pay the annual rent from his salary which the managers may choose to impose. Those who make

contributions to the managers are to have valuable opportunities for contracts and gains. It is as obligatory a part of the duty of an officer to support the system which supports him, as it is to comply with the statutes or serve the public. He may divert moneys from the public treasury to fill that of his party by means that would be peculation were the money put in his own pocket. The party managers are to defend and protect the officers they appoint to the utmost that a politician's conscience will permit. Removals are to be made whenever the new man for the office bids fair to be more profitable to the system than the one turned out, no matter how inferior in character or capacity. Every officer having the power of appointment and removal may use that power to advance himself, to sustain the machine, to punish its enemies, or to purchase votes and influence. In the matter of administration, the spoils system of New York does not essentially differ in kind, but only in degree, from that of other States and of the nation. Yet the difference is great. I have space for only the most meagre illustration. Under this system, as applied by New York partisans to the New York custom house (until lately arrested), one fourth of all the clerks have been removed each year. During three years, within a recent period, 830 of 903 clerks—or three every four days, including Sundays—were removed for mere partisan reasons. The machine managers have systematically bartered with Tammany

Hall, or any available Democratic faction, for patronage, by methods as reprehensible as the practices of Tammany itself. When a leader of one of the city primaries was lately made city judge, every officer or employee of the court was summarily dismissed only that places might be made for primary henchmen and favorites. At this moment the managers are attempting to remodel the city charter merely to gain patronage and spoils. When, a few months ago, they were able to control the nomination of a member of the Board of Police Justices, who deal with more than 80,000 criminal arrests each year, and when every consideration of duty and policy required that an experienced lawyer should be selected, they imposed upon the Mayor an intensely partisan butcher, as utterly unfit for the place as he was to command a steamship or to give lectures at a medical college. Six hundred years ago an open rebellion compelled King John to declare, in the great charter, that "he would not make justices but of such "as know the law of the realm." Never before in the history of the State has the appointing power of the governor been prostituted in a manner so disgraceful or so disastrous to the party as since the election of Mr. Cornell. He persisted, for example, in urging upon the Senate, for Insurance Commissioner, an unscrupulous schemer so notoriously unfit for the office that the popular indignation aroused was without precedent in this State.

The last Democratic governor, Robinson, had brought this nominee (Smyth) to trial for official delinquency. The defense was that the act making his official extortions illegal was unconstitutional, and he was acquitted by the *votes of John Kelly's Tammany Senators*, whose factious policy alone enabled Mr. Cornell to become governor.

"The feeling against him was deepened and the "sense of his guilt confirmed by the fact that the "money so obtained had been divided among other "agents of the machine or ring. The New York "*Times* says that *in one case the place of division was the "house of Mr. Cornell*, then either the chairman or leading member of the State Committee, now the governor of the State, who, in the face of all these facts "and the shameful performance of Mr. Smyth in calling the Albany primaries without notice, nominated "him to a Republican Senate for re-appointment!"\*

Out of seventy-eight leading papers in the State, there were but eight—and these, I believe, the more dependent—which even attempted to defend the governor! He was compelled to bow, ignominiously, before the popular wrath. But the party was disgraced. The friends of the party have been exasperated, and the executive office has been degraded as never before by a Republican governor.

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\* *Harper's Weekly*, March 13, 1880.

It has been such disgraceful facts—the acts of a Republican governor thus disastrously contrasted before the people with the acts of a Democratic governor—which have of late so deepened the Independent sentiment and made the vote of the State the more doubtful.

III. It remains only to look at the New York system on the side toward the nation. The mere demand of federal patronage and spoils, within the State, is not in itself peculiar. But nowhere else are the demands so arbitrarily made or the spoils nearly as great. It is only in New York that federal officers are numerous enough, and exactions upon their salaries can be made large enough, to supply in a great measure the men and the money needed for working the partisan machinery. The New York system makes a State Senator a patronage general or *Imperator* of the party. His supreme duty is to guide the machine and manage the party affairs of his State. So far as convenient he may discharge the duties of a Senator, but he must never allow the New York system to be impaired. The other federal officers are subordinate under him—the collector at the port of New York being his first assistant, and the other subordinates according to their grade. The federal buildings and offices, under this system, are the forts, redoubts, magazines, martello towers, rifle-pits, of politics. Senators and Repre-

sentatives in Congress must not urge federal interest to the prejudice of the home system. Until recently, the New York methods in their federal relations had differed only in degree from those of other States. But within a few years, Mr. Conkling, Mr. Cornell, and their confederates, have made an extension. The New York managers had before acknowledged allegiance to national conventions and administrations. That allegiance is now repudiated. New York must still obey the federal constitution, it is true ; but national party platforms cannot be enforced against the party managers in New York. These managers have made a declaration of independence, and set up for themselves. They are ready to make treaties, but they must be dealt with as independent powers. The naval officer or collector at New York owes a higher obedience to the *Imperator* and to the machine than to the President. He may resist the President's construction of the platform upon which he was elected, and the legal orders under which he requires official duties to be discharged. The *Imperator* may take sides against the President—not merely on legal or constitutional grounds, but in mere caprice and wanton willfulness—in favor of the disobedient officer. There is no more duty to stand or speak for the general policy than there is for the particular acts of the administration, if it is not in conformity with the theory of the New York system or with the ambition of its managers. If the President does not yield,

when thus admonished from New York, he may be confronted in the Senate. Nor is that all. New York may get up a packed convention, send delegates to carry out the views of the *Imperator* and his subordinates in the National Convention, and may silence by arbitrary instructions all those who would dissent from the new dogma added to her spoils system. Such is the New York system in its national bearings.

The spoils of federal administration have degraded and corrupted New York politics. It was because federal salaries were being protected against State pillage in New York, because federal places were being closed to mere henchmen and favorites, because federal buildings were being withheld from use as partisan strongholds and asylums, because federal officers were not allowed to serve as generals, colonels, and captains in partisan campaigns, that the New York managers rebelled and resisted. Their desperate effort in the next campaign is to recapture their old prizes and reinstate their old system. *The question is whether the nation and the President, or New York and the imperators, shall officer and man the federal offices and protect the federal salaries and revenue in New York, in the future.*

IV. It would be easy to prove that such a system has in New York lowered the standard of official life, brought into office an inferior class of politicians, and

made statesmanship almost impossible. But this would carry me beyond my purpose. A few illustrations on the national side of the system must suffice. Before that system had too long prevailed, Marcy, Van Buren, Wright, and Dix showed that New York could produce first-class statesmen. She has produced not one since,\* except Seward, who appeared in a transitional period, when a great contest about principles made machine politics impossible. In later years no State, in proportion to the wealth, numbers, and intelligence of her people, has had so little weight in Congress and national affairs as New York. During the last forty years a State having a tenth of the population of the Union has not been able to furnish any candidate for the presidency, with reasonable hopes of an election. For more than half a century, during which Pennsylvania and Massachusetts have each furnished two speakers of the House of Representatives, New York has scarcely had a third-rate candidate for that office. Ohio and Massachusetts have each almost constantly had more able men in Congress in late years than New York. The New York system keeps able men back by always demanding new officers to tax and new places to fill; it calls home a congressman as soon as he begins to be most useful—always excepting a very few partisan favorites. Out of the thirty-three members of the

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\* Mr. Evarts can hardly be said to have taken a part in political affairs, except in an attitude hostile to the peculiar politics of New York.



present House of Representatives from New York, only seven have a collegiate education, few have much experience, and nearly all are unknown beyond their own State. Among the eleven members from Massachusetts, seven have a collegiate education ; among the twenty from Ohio, thirteen have a collegiate education ; among the twenty-seven from Pennsylvania, fourteen have a collegiate education. Thus we see that the New York system has been as fatal to learning and ability in public life, as it has been to honesty, fidelity, and true party allegiance.

V. We have only to compare the political life of Mr. Seward with that of Mr. Conkling to get a clear view of the vast difference between the liberal and independent sentiments in which the Republican party of New York was born and the partisan servility by which it is imperiled. The first political speech ever made by Mr. Seward was in a convention against the despotism of the Albany Regency, which he destroyed. The last political speech made by Mr. Conkling was in a convention to extend that same despotism, which he has reproduced. Upon declaring his adhesion to the principles of the Republican party, Mr. Seward expressly reserved "that personal independence" which he declared to be his "birthright" and always maintained. In his attempted leadership of that party, the influence and example of Mr. Conkling, from the doors of the

primaries to the doors of the Senate, have been constantly hostile to that birthright of independence. In the Senate, the originality and the eloquence of Mr. Seward were conspicuous for every measure resting upon great principles or supported by those sentiments which are above mere party selfishness. Mr. Conkling, in the Senate, has never been identified with any such measure or given expression to any such sentiment. Upon Senator Seward being defeated in 1860 by Mr. Lincoln as a candidate for the presidency, he at once gave his successful rival a hearty and vigorous support, making many speeches East and West, and serving under him with distinguished ability as Secretary of State. Senator Conkling, upon being defeated by Mr. Hayes as a candidate for the presidency in 1876, at once entered upon a course of disparagement and persistent hostility, sneering at the efforts to carry the national platform into effect, and becoming distinguished as the leader of a factious rebellion in New York. In the circles of official life in his own State, and in his many speeches before the public, Mr. Seward fitly expressed the broad, reforming, and enlightened spirit of his party; advocating reforms and reorganizations in the prison system, in the militia system, in the educational system, in the system of public works, in the courts of law and equity, in the asylums, in the banking system, and in the State constitution in various ways. He knew also what was necessary to

secure the coherence of parties, and to give practical efficiency to the members in their ranks. He did his whole duty in that regard. But he was not so absorbed in working the machinery that he could not feel the broader and deeper forces of sentiment and of principle. His liberality and unselfish patriotism brought great strength to his party, and his example conferred honor upon office, and showed how it might be associated with what is highest and noblest in the moral and intellectual life of a nation. The volumes he has left behind him will bear testimony, in future generations, to the spirit and principles in which the Republican party found the vitality of its youth. His orations on Adams, O'Connell and Lafayette, his speeches on agriculture, his Columbus address, his address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society and at Plymouth, his notes on New York, his life of John Quincy Adams, his biography of De Witt Clinton, to say nothing of many eulogies and speeches in other fields of thought, show what a New York statesman may do whose powers are not absorbed and whose thought is not dwarfed by the exacting details and the demoralizing intrigues of mere partisan politics.

There is no need to complete the comparison. The language already quoted from Mr. Conkling and the familiar facts of current history supply the rest. I am not dealing with the private lives of these men. My sole aim is to illustrate the relative effect of their

theories of politics and of their system of party management upon the men and upon the country. What we most need to notice is that the New York politician of to-day is so dwarfed and blinded by the system that produced him, that he finds his ideal in Mr. Conkling and not in Mr. Seward, and that now a New York senator may be an admired and despotic leader within the partisan lines, but without respect, and, in influence or action, almost unknown beyond them. He lives in a partisan circle by himself. Can such a system continue; can such changes go on and the Republican party maintain its supremacy? If Mr. Seward was now alive, would he not, in view of the growing antagonism between the machine and the Independents, repeat his words at Rochester: "Shall I tell you what this collision means? They who think that it is accidental, unnecessary, the work of interested or fanatical agitators, and therefore ephemeral, mistake the case altogether. It is an irresistible conflict between opposing and enduring forces."

## CHAPTER XI.

THE INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT A DEVELOPMENT, AND  
NOT A MERE UPRISING. ITS TRUE AIMS. HOW  
IT SHOULD BE TREATED AT CHICAGO.

IT would be a great mistake to treat the Independent movement as a sudden outburst of disgust or discontent, and therefore likely to be ephemeral. It is really but a more advanced stage of a long continuing disaffection and revolt against partisanship and venality in State politics. The earlier manifestations have, as a rule, only taken the form of organized action against abuses in detail or against special measures proposed. Their more vigorous forms have, however, kept pace with the growth of the peculiar New York system. It is only the present movement that is thoroughly radical, and has proposed to go back and attack that system at the polls. But the earlier efforts were, as much as this last, evidence that the better class of citizens could not make themselves felt through the regular party methods, and yet would not tamely submit.

One of the earliest of these organizations was the well-known "*Citizens' Association*," which accomplished much good.

The celebrated *Committee of Seventy* superseded that association in 1871, and has secured important results. It gave the better sentiment more confidence in its own power.

*The Council of Political Reform* is a kindred association, which for many years has been effective in promoting various reforms, and it is yet active in its work.

*The New York Municipal Society* is a legally organized corporation for like ends, and is now engaged in resisting the abuses and in withstanding the influence of the machine system of politics.

*The Fifth Avenue Conference* of 1876, though national in its membership and aims, was inspired by the same independent and reforming spirit as the others. It was called and met in New York, and there, more than elsewhere, found the evils and the objectionable candidates against which it was a protest. It was especially important as showing how widely spread is that disaffection which has its chief source and strength in New York.

*The New York Independent Republicans* were a very influential organization in 1876, and co-operating with the Fifth Avenue Conference, they made their just influence felt before the Cincinnati Convention of that year. The resolutions were almost identical in spirit

with the principles of the present Independents, except that the latter have added the theory of resisting in the elections.

*The Union League Club*, the most distinguished and powerful of all these Republican organizations, has, however, more completely than any other anticipated the views of the present Independents. Its position on civil service reform is shown by its resolutions in the Appendix. But certain resolutions adopted by that club in May, 1876, may be accepted as a just expression of the better Republican opinion of New York—now as then—an opinion stronger to-day than ever before. They declare (I quote the more material points):

“*Second.*—That the exclusive management and control of the local affairs of the party in the State, by an organized machinery of office-holders, which suppresses and ignores the real voice of the voters of the party, is an intolerable grievance to which *we refuse any longer to submit.*”

“*Third.*—That we demand that the *independent* and disinterested Republicans of the city and State shall be fairly represented in the selection of delegates about to be chosen to the State and National Conventions.”

“*Fourth.*—That the purpose which has been openly avowed and threatened to be put in practical operation, of sending to the National Convention at Cincinnati a delegation from the State of New York made

“up at a State convention, and pledged or committed  
“beforehand to the support of particular candidates, is  
“a gross violation of the first principles of Republican  
“institutions, and an outrage upon the rights and the  
“wishes of the great majority of the party. We insist  
“that the representation of the State of New York in  
“that convention shall be committed to a delegation  
“wholly unpacked and *unpledged, who shall be untram-*  
“*meled and free to choose from among all the candi-*  
“*dates* that may be brought before the convention ;  
“and unless this can be conceded to us, *we refuse to be*  
“*bound by its action.*”

“*Fifth.*—That, desiring, as we most earnestly do, the  
“success of the Republican party in the next presiden-  
“tial election, we wish explicitly to avow our convic-  
“tion that such success is not possible unless the candi-  
“date of the Republican party be a man who is *not*  
“*only identified with its great principles, but also a man*  
“*who has had no connection, direct or indirect, with the*  
“*errors and abuses which have brought reproach upon the*  
“*fair name of the country and the party*, and who is  
“above any suspicion of sympathy or association with  
“those who have been guilty of these abuses. In our  
“judgment, and, we believe, in that of all unbiased and  
“reflecting men, the exigencies of the party, as well as  
“the country, at this time demand a President who  
“shall be deservedly recognized as a *Reformer* as well  
“as a Republican.”



It was a substantial approval of such principles by the National Convention of 1876 which averted a division in the Republican party of New York in the elections of that year. Now the stress is still greater than in 1876, and cannot long continue without a great explosion. "The Republicans of New York will not submit indefinitely to a dictatorship. This conciliatory disposition will not last much longer. The patience outraged by managers is all but exhausted."\*

Returning to the attitude of the Independents, we may see that it is only in a small degree original, but is the natural outcome of much experience, and of a growing spirit of repugnance to the proscriptive, selfish, and domineering management of the party in New York. The party, therefore, is confronted with the necessity of deciding whether it will follow the lead of that management into wider and wider departure from principles and purity, or will unite its broken ranks and combine the disaffected elements of its power by a firm adhesion to principles, and by extending those methods which check the growth of the spoils system, and more and more bring character and capacity into the public service—whether the Chicago Convention shall withstand or shall yield to the demands of a despotic system and a rebellious spirit in New York, which, by closing the party gates to free men, and the mouths of delegates to

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\* *New York Times*, Editorial Nov. 9, 1879.

free speech, but aggravate an existing conflict which can end only by the overthrow of that system, or by the ruin of the Republican party.

It has been no part of the object of these pages to consider what the Independents and other citizens ought to do for the reform of the New York system. Responsibility for its existence does not by any means rest upon the party leaders and their followers alone, but largely upon the Independents and all well-to-do citizens. While the essential object now is to prevent a vicious system being strengthened and approved by the national councils of the party, it will remain a supreme duty of New York Republicans to make that system yield to just methods of party action. No very sudden improvements are to be expected. Reform must proceed by moderate stages. It will unquestionably be difficult to devise and put in practice a good system of primaries. It cannot be on the theory that principle and patriotism are the only powerful elements in politics. Ambition and selfishness must have their just opportunities. But these two points I regard as certain: that the Republican party can never possess its true strength in New York with the primaries it has, and that its worthiest members will never enter its regular lines through the present gates of servility. More open, liberal, and honorable methods of party action must be substituted. And when federal patronage and the contributions of federal officers cannot be

used as bribes and prizes in the party management of the State, it is but reasonable to hope that patriotism and principle will be strong enough to enforce a better system. Here will be the abiding work and duty of the Independents in our State and municipal politics.



## A P P E N D I X.

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### I. THE INDEPENDENTS' STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLES ARE AS FOLLOWS :

I. Independent Republicans adhere to the Republican principles of national supremacy, sound finance, and civil service reform, expressed in the Republican platform of 1876, in the letter of acceptance of President Hayes, and in his message of 1879, and they seek the realization of those principles in practical laws and their efficient administration. This requires :

1. The continuance on the statute book of laws protecting the rights of voters at national elections. But national supremacy affords no pretext for interference with the local rights of communities, and the development of the South from its present defective civilization can be secured only under constitutional methods, such as those of President Hayes.

2. The passage of laws which shall deprive greenbacks of their legal tender quality, as a first step toward their ultimate withdrawal and cancellation, and shall maintain all coins made legal tender, at such weight and fineness as will enable them to be used without discount in the commercial transactions of the world.

3. The repeal of the acts which limit the terms of office of certain government officials to four years ; the repeal of the tenure of office acts, which limit the power of the Executive to remove for cause ; the establishment of a permanent Civil Service Commission, or equivalent measures, to ascertain by open competition and certify to the President, or other appointing power, the fitness of applicants for nomination or appointment to all non-political offices.

II. Independent Republicans believe that local issues should be independent of party. The words Republican and Democrat should have no

weight in determining whether a school district or a city shall be administered on business principles by capable men. With a view to this, legislation is asked which shall prescribe for the voting for local and for State officers upon separate ballots.

III. Independent Republicans assert that a political party is a co-operation among voters to secure the practical enactment into legislation of political convictions set forth as its platform. Every voter accepting that platform is a member of that party; any representative of that party opposing the principles or evading the promises of its platform forfeits the support of its voters. No voter should be held by the action or nomination of any caucus or convention of his party against his private judgment. It is his duty to vote against bad measures and unfit men as the only means of obtaining good ones, and if his party no longer represents its professed principles in its practical workings, it is his duty to vote against it.

IV. Independent Republicans seek good nominations through participation in the primaries, and through the defeat of bad nominees; they will labor for the defeat of any local Republican candidate and, in co-operation with those holding like views elsewhere, for the defeat of any general Republican candidate whom they do not deem fit

## II. CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

1. The National Republican Convention of June, 1872, resolved "That any system of the civil service under which the subordinate positions of the government are considered rewards for mere party zeal is fatally demoralizing, and we therefore favor a reform of the system by laws which shall abolish the evils of patronage and make honesty, efficiency, fidelity, the essential qualifications for public positions, without practically creating a life-tenure of office."

2. The National Republican Convention of 1876 resolved "That under the constitution, the President and heads of departments are to make nominations for office; the Senate is to advise and consent to appointments, and the House of Representatives is to accuse and prosecute faithless officers. The best interests of the public service demand that these distinctions be respected; that Senators and Representatives, who may be judges and accusers, should not dictate appointments to office. The invariable rule for appointments should have reference to the honesty, fidelity, and capacity of the appointees—giving to the party in power those places where harmony and vigor of administration re-

"quire its policy represented, but permitting all others to be filled by  
 "persons selected with sole reference to the efficiency of the public ser-  
 "vice and the right of citizens to share in the honor of rendering faithful  
 "service to their country."

3. THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB, in May, 1876, resolved "That this  
 "Club, while looking to the triumph of the Republican party, . . . yet  
 "believes that such triumph is possible only in the event that the party  
 "shall . . . carry forward that thorough reform of the civil service to  
 "which the Republican party is pledged.

"*Resolved*, That in view of the civil service resolutions of the Repub-  
 "lican party in 1872, and of the present condition of that service, it  
 "would be no less bad policy than infidelity to a pledge made before the  
 "nation to leave it open to doubt whether that party is willing to tolerate  
 "a system of partisan and personal favoritism which has disgraced the  
 "public service and alarmed all good citizens."

4. In President Hayes' last annual message, the results in New York  
 City of the limited methods of reform he has been able to enforce, without  
 any appropriation by Congress, are stated as follows: "The reports from  
 "the Secretary of the Interior, from the Postmaster General, from the  
 "Postmaster in the City of New York, where such examinations have been  
 "for some time on trial, and also from the Collector of the Port and the  
 "Surveyor in that city, and from the postmasters and collectors in several  
 "of the larger cities, show that the competitive system, where applied,  
 "has in various ways contributed to improve the public service. The re-  
 "ports show that the result has been salutary in a marked degree, and that  
 "the general application of similar rules cannot fail to be of decided ben-  
 "efit to the service. The reports of the government officers of the City  
 "of New York, especially, bear decided testimony to the utility of open  
 "competitive examinations in their respective offices, showing that these  
 "examinations, and the excellent qualifications of those admitted to the  
 "service through them, have had a marked incidental effect upon the  
 "persons previously in the service, and particularly upon those aspiring to  
 "promotion. There has been, on the part of those latter, an increased  
 "interest in the work, and a desire to extend acquaintance with what is  
 "beyond their particular desk, and thus the *morale* of the entire force has  
 "been raised."

It has been such facts, demonstrated before the eyes of the people of  
 New York, that have caused the Independents to make prominent the  
 demand for the continuance of the reform, and the public press to give it  
 more support than ever before.

## III. THIRD TERM RESOLUTIONS.

## REPUBLICAN PLATFORM, NEW YORK STATE.

Adopted September 8, 1875.

*Eighth.*—Recognizing as conclusive the President's public declaration that he is not a candidate for renomination, and with the sincerest gratitude for his patriotic services, we declare our unalterable opposition to the election of any President for a third term.

## PENNSYLVANIA REPUBLICAN CONVENTION.

Adopted May 26, 1875.

That we declare a firm, unqualified adherence to the unwritten law of the Republic, which wisely, and under the sanction of the most venerable of examples, limits the Presidential service of any citizen to two terms, and we, the Republicans of Pennsylvania, in recognition of this law, are unalterably opposed to the election to the Presidency of any person for a third term.

## MASSACHUSETTS REPUBLICAN CONVENTION, 1875.

That sound reason, as well as the wise and unbroken usage of the Republic, illustrated by the example of Washington, requires that the term of the Chief Magistrate of the United States should not exceed a second term.

On the 18th of December, 1875, the Republican members of the House of Representatives, with but eighteen dissenters, voted for this resolution :

“That, in the opinion of this House, the precedent established by “WASHINGTON and other Presidents, in retiring from the Presidential “office after their second term, has become by universal concurrence a “part of our republican system of government, and that any departure “from this time-honored custom would be unwise, unpatriotic, and “fraught with peril to our free institutions.”













